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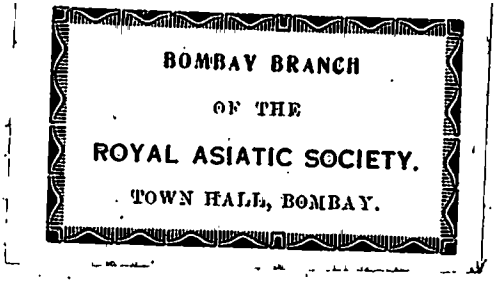

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MILMAN'S

POETICAL WORKS.

VOL. III.

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LONDON,
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET,
1840.

THE

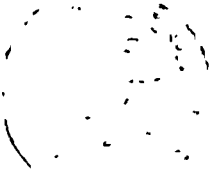
POETICAL WORKS

OF THE

REV: H. H. MILMAN

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



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INTRODUCTION.

THE subject of the following Drama had long appeared to me peculiarly adapted to the purposes of poetry. I had, some time ago, imagined a sketch, in a great degree similar to that which I have now filled up. The course of professional study, which led me to the early annals of our Church, recalled it to my remembrance, and, as it were, forced it on my attention. In the outline of the plot, and the development of the characters, especially that of Anne Boleyn, I have endeavoured to preserve historical truth: where history is silent, I have given free scope to poetic license, and introduced a character entirely imaginary. In endeavouring to embody that awful spirit of fanaticism—the more awful, because strictly conscientious—which was arrayed against our early Reformers, I hope to be considered as writing of those times alone. The representation of the manner in which bigotry hardens into intolerance, intolerance into cruelty and an infringement on the great eternal principles of morality, can never be an unprofitable lesson. The annals of all nations, in which reformation was begun or completed; those of the League in France, of the Low Countries and Spain, as well as of England, will fully bear me out in the picture which I have drawn: but I have no hesitation in asserting that even in those times the wise and good among the Roman Catholics reprobated, as strongly as ourselves, the sanguinary and unprincipled means by which the power of the Papacy was maintained. I should observe, that I have, I trust with no unpardonable anachronism, anticipated

the perfect organization of that society, from which, as Robertson has with justice stated, "mankind have derived more advantages, and received greater injuries, than from any other of the religious fraternities." Though its founder had already made many proselytes, the society was not formally incorporated till about five years after the death of Anne Boleyn.

It may appear almost superfluous to add, that the manner in which the poem is written, as well as the religious nature of the interest, must for ever preclude it from public representation.

The author of a tragedy, recently published under the same name, having pointed out some coincidences of expression between his drama and mine, I beg to state, most explicitly, that previous to the publication of Anne Boleyn I had never seen, either in MS. or print, any contemporary poem on the same subject.

ANNE BOLEYN.

A

Dramatic Poem.

CHARACTERS.

KING HENRY VIII.

ARCHBISHOP CRANMER.

STEPHEN GARDINER, *Bishop of Winchester.*

LORD ROCHFORD, *Brother of Queen Anne.*

DUKE OF NORFOLK.

SIR HENRY NORREYS,
SIR FRANCIS WESTON,
SIR WILLIAM BRERETON. } *Attendants on Queen Anne.*

SIR WILLIAM KINGSTON, *Lieutenant of the Tower.*

ANGELO CARAFFA, *a follower of Ignatius Loyola.*

MARK SMEATON.

QUEEN ANNE.

COUNTESS OF ROCHFORD.

COUNTESS OF WILTSHIRE, *Mother of Queen Anne.*

MAGDALENE SMEATON.

ANNE BOLEYN.

SCENE.—*A small Garden near Westminster.*

MARK SMEATON, MAGDALENE SMEATON.

MAGDALENE.

OH welcome, welcome—though I scarcely hoped
That he who long hath dwelt in foreign climes,
And now comes wearing the proud garb of Courts,
Would waste the precious treasure of a thought
On poor forgotten sister Magdalene.

MARK.

Still the same humble tender Magdalene,
Who deems, that none can rate her modest worth
More high than her retiring self. Sweet sister,
I would not wound thy heaven-devoted ears
With the unwonted sounds of worldly flattery;
But in far distant climes, 'mid strangers' faces,
That night was sweetest when I dream'd of thee,
Our native garden here, our little world
Of common joys and sorrows.

MAGDALENE.

Dearest Mark,
The heart deems truth whate'er it wishes true.
And wilt thou now and then steal hither to me
When thou'rt not call'd for at the Court? wilt bring
Thy music, such as in the royal Chapel
Thou'rt wont to sing? Rude though my ear, it loves
Thy music, brother.

MARK.

Dearest, yes, I'll bring
All these, and hymns forbidden there; there 's one
Was taught me by a simple fisher boy,
That sail'd the azure tide of that bright bay
That laves the walls of Naples: as he sung—
What time the midnight waves were starr'd with barks,
Each with its single glowworm lamp, that tipt
The waters round with rippling lines of light—
You would have thought Heaven's queen had strew'd around
Silence, like that among the stars, when pause
The Angels in ecstatic adoration.

MAGDALENE.

Speak on, speak on!—Were it a stranger's voice
That thus discoursed, I could lose days in listening;
But thine——

MARK.

Oh! Magdalene, thou know'st not here
In our chill, damp, and heavy atmosphere,

The power, might, magic, mystery of sweet sounds!
Oh! on some rock to sit, the twilight winds
Breathing all odour by—at intervals
To hear the hymnings of some virgin choir,
With pauses musical as music's self,
Come swelling up from deep and unseen distance:
Or under some vast dome, like Heaven's blue cope,
All full and living with the liquid deluge
Of harmony, till pillars, walls, and aisles,
The altar paintings and cold images,
Catch life and motion, and the weight of feeling
Lies like a load upon the breathless bosom!
But speaking thus, hours will seem minutes, sister,
And——

MAGDALENE.

Thou would'st say farewell. Yet ere we part
I long to speak one word—I dare not say
Of counsel—but the love, whose only study
Is one heart's book, gains deeper knowledge, Mark,
Of its dark leaves, than schools can teach, or man
Learn from his fellow men.

MARK.

Sage monitress!

MAGDALENE.

Oh! Mark, Mark—in one cradle were we laid,
Our souls were born together, bred together;
In all thy thoughts, emotions, my fond love
Anticipated thine own consciousness;

I felt them, ere thyself knew thine own feelings:
And never yet impetuous wish was born
In that warm heart, but till fulfilment crown'd it
Thou wert its slave—its bounden, fetter'd slave.
Oh! watch thyself, mistrust, fear——

MARK.

What?

MAGDALENE.

Why all things.—
In that loose Court, they say, each hard observance,
Fast, penance, all the rites of holy Church,
Are scoff'd; the dainty limbs are all too proud
T' endure the chastening sackcloth. Sin is still
Contagious: like herself are those that wait
On that heretical and wicked Queen.

MARK.

The wicked Queen!—oh! sister, dearest sister,
For the first time I'd see thy pure cheek burn
With penitent tears; go kneel, and ask Heaven's pardon—
Scourge thy misjudging heart—the wicked Queen!
Heaven's living miracle of all its graces!
There's not a breathing being in her presence
But watches the least motion of a look,
Th' unutter'd intimation of desire,
And lives upon the hope of doing service,
That done, is like the joy blest Angels feel
In minist'ring to prayers of holiest Saints.
Authority she wears as 'twere her birthright;

And when our rooted knees would grow to earth
In adoration, reassuring gaiety
Makes the soul smile at its own fears.

MAGDALENE.

But, Mark,
Believes she as the Church believes?

MARK.

I know not
What she believes—I see but what she does.
Loose Court, and shameless Queen!—her audience
Is of the wretched, destitute, forlorn:
The usher to that Court is Beggary,
And Want the chamberlain; her flatterers, those
Whose eloquence is full and bursting hearts;
Her parasites, wan troops of starving men
Round the full furnish'd board—pale dowerless maids—
Nuns, like thyself, cast forth from their chaste cloisters
To meet the bitter usage of the world;
While holiest men are ever in her presence:
Nor can their lavish charity exhaust
The treasures of her goodness.

MAGDALENE.

Oh! Mark, Mark—
My only joy on earth—who, if my soul
E'er dream'd of Heaven, wert evermore a part,
Th' intelligible part of its full bliss,
Thou art not warp'd by pride of new opinion?

MARK.

Is 't new t' adore the mingled consummation
Of beauty, gentleness, and goodness?

MAGDALENE.

Cease!
For this, for hearing this, I must do penance—
Fast, weep, and pray; and, oh! beware, beware—
The holy Father comes, whose keen eye reads
The inmost soul; I've felt him pluck the thought
I dared not speak, from its dark sanctuary
I' the heart, and cast it down before mine eyes
Till my soul shudder'd at its own corruption.
He sees us not—stand back—'twere ill t' intrude
Upon his saintly privacy, whose soul
Haply is prostrate at Our Lady's feet,
In our behalf, his poor unworthy flock.
Half of his life, our lady Abbess says,
Is spent in Heaven, while the pale body here
Pines in the absence of its nobler guest.

MARK.

How, Angelo!

MAGDALENE.

Peace, peace; seal lips and ears.

[*They retire.*

ANGELO CARAFFA.

ANGELO CARAFFA.

They cross'd me, and I needs must follow—to th' Abbey
T' insult their fathers' graves; to mock the Saints
That from the high empurpled windows glare
On the proud worshippers, whose secret hearts
Disdain their intercession; scarce a lamp
Burnt on the prayerless shrines, and here and there
Some wan sad vot'ress, in Our Lady's chapel,
Listening in vain for the full anthem, told
Her beads, and shrunk from her own lonely voice.
But when I saw the Arch-heretic enrobed
In the cope and pall of mitred Canterbury,
Lift the dread Host with misbelieving hands,
And heard another's voice profane read out,
In their own dissonant and barbarous tongue,
The living word of God, the choking wrath
Convulsed my throat, and hurrying forth I sought
A secret and unechoing place, t' unload
My burthen'd heart!
'Twas the first time—the last
That holy Indignation hath o'erleap'd
Wisdom's strong barriers—the ill-govern'd features
Play'd traitor to the close-wrapt heart.
But thou
That art a part of God's dread majesty,
In whose dusk robe his own disastrous purposes

Th' Almighty veils, twin born with Destiny,
Inexorable Secrecy! come, cowl
This soul in deep impervious blackness!—Grant
I may deny myself the pride and fame
Of bringing back this loose apostate land
To the true Faith. Be all mine agency
Secret as are the springs of living fire
In the world's centre, bury deep my name,
That mortal eye ne'er read it, till emblazed
Amid the roll of Christ's great Saints and Martyrs
It shake away the oblivious gloom of ages.

ANGELO, MARK, MAGDALENE.

ANGELO.

Ye may approach—the youth, or I mistake,
Of whom Saavedra wrote, whose dulcet voice
And skilful handling the sweet lute were famed
Through Italy—most fair report, young man,
Hath been thy harbinger.

MARK.

Good reverend father,
That men so wise, whose words are treasured counsels
To mightiest Kings, should deign to note a name
Like mine, moves wonder.

ANGELO.

Youth, thou hast a soul,
For which thy spiritual guide must answer,

As for a Monarch's; in her care, the Church
That guards the loftiest, ne'er o'erlooks the meanest.
Thou'rt new about the Court, and our good Queen,
With gracious affability, will sit
Listening to thy sweet languaged lute; thou'rt there
In high esteem.

MARK.

Her Highness hath been pleased
To hear me more than once; but word of praise
From her had been a treasure, that my memory
Had laid in store, for my whole life to brood on.

ANGELO (*aside*).

So warm!——I had forgot thy station, youth;
But with the great we rank far less by birth
Than estimation; and the power of ministering
To their delight becomes nobility.

MARK.

What?—says your wisdom so?

ANGELO.

Good youth, I charge thee,
Cherish that modesty that well becomes thee;
But yet if Fame belie thee not, thy powers
May bind high-scop'd Advancement to thy service—
Thou may'st compote ere long with——which affects
Her Majesty most of her servants?

MARK.

Each
Partakes alike of that all-winning case—

Not the proud condescension, which disdains
Most manifestly when it stoops the lowest—
All are her slaves, seeming almost her equals:
She 's loved——

ANGELO.

Enough !—Report speaks bounteously
Of Henry Norreys: he and William Brereton
And Francis Weston, are about her still——

MARK.

Not one, I do believe, would deem his life
Ill barter'd for her service——

ANGELO.

And Lord Rochford,
Her noble brother—as a Poet, youth,
His art is kindred to thine own, its rival
In making the mute air we breathe an element
Of purest intellectual joy—the Queen
To her close privacy admits.

MARK.

I've heard
She takes delight beyond all words to hear
Our harsher English tongue, by his smooth skill,
And noble Surrey's, and learn'd Wyatt's, flow
Melodious, as the honey-lipp'd Italian.

ANGELO.

'Tis well. Thy orphan'd youth, I learn, Mark Smeaton,
Wants that imperious curb Heaven delegates
To parents' hands; mine order, rank, and station,

Give to my counsels th' impress of command:
I charge thee then, by thine own soul—beware—
Should golden honours, as belike they may,
Shower on thee, wear them still with humbleness.
Serve that bewitching but too easy Queen
Assiduously, but still honourably.
Aspire not, by whatever voice thou'rt summon'd,
To perilous distinction; youth, again
I say, take heed—one single day omit not,
On forfeiture of my paternal care,
To pour thy full confessing soul before me.

MARK.

What can your Wisdom mean?

MAGDALENE.

He means, dear brother,
To merit his poor servants' prayers for this—
Prayers that shall mount before the earliest lark,
Earth's first thanksgiving voice t' indulgent Heaven.
Withdraw, withdraw, he heeds no more—away.

[*Exeunt.*

ANGELO.

That warning was a master-stroke: it brings
The impossible within the scope of thought;
We do forbid but what may come to pass;
And he will brood on it, because forbidden,
Till his whole soul is madness. All the rest
Are full of their proud honour, and disdain
To torture with vain villainous misconstruction
Each innocent phrase to looseness. Cursed woman!

'Gainst whom remorselessness is loftiest duty,
And mercy sin beyond Heaven's grace—think'st thou
To be a Queen, and dare to be a woman!
Play fool upon thy dizzy precipice,
Nor smile, nor word, nor look, nor thought but 's noted
In our dark registers; each playful jest
Is chronicled, and we are rich in all
That 's ocular proof and circumstance of guilt
To jealousy's distemper'd ear.
And thou,
Proud King! the Church's head!—each lustful thought,
Each murtherous deed, is a new link of the chain
By which our slaves are trammell'd: we'll let slip
Thy own fierce passions, ruthless as the dogs
Of war, to prey on thy obdurate heart;
And they shall drag thee down, base, suppliant,
Beneath our feet—or drive thee maddening on,
A hideous monster of all guilt, to fright
The world from its apostasy, and brand
The Heretic cause with thy eternal shame.

Whitehall.

QUEEN ANNE, ATTENDANTS, HER ALMONER.

ALMONER.

So please your Majesty, your pensioners
Flock in such hungry and still gathering troops,
The table 's full.

QUEEN.

Then, Sir, spread more; the Queen
Commands it.

ALMONER.

But the cost, your Grace!

QUEEN.

Weigh that
When thou dost serve ourself, not our poor neighbours.
Why sate I down but yesterday, 'mid pomps
And luxuries that might have fed a village?
Go coin those wines, barter for homelier cates
Those candied superfluities.

ALMONER.

It stands not
With the King's honour thus to mulct and limit
Your Highness' state.

QUEEN.

Still less, Sir, to contract
And weigh with base frugality the alms
His Grace bestows through me, his humble agent.
The bounty of the King, Heaven's delegate,
Should be as Heaven's: the Sun, that through the grate
Of some barr'd dungeon lights the pallid cheek
Of the poor prisoner, is a gracious gift;
But that which argues the great God of Nature
Is the rich prodigality of light,
That kindles the wide universal sky
And gladdens worlds. But to descend to truths

Of homelier prudence. 'Tis not well to feast
A lazy herd of sleek unlabouring drones.
Most true, Sir; but his Majesty hath pleased
To take some certain Convents and rich Abbeys
Into his royal hands; they, that were bred
To sun themselves in careless indolence,
Are cast abroad to buffet the hard world
For bare subsistence; even the once mitred Lords
Of manors, benefices, lands, and palaces,
Ill husbanding their limited maintenance,
Are brought to beggary and painful want:
Therefore our bounty must outrun awhile
Our better wisdom.

ALMONER.

I obey your Highness.

QUEEN.

And have our best thanks for your prudent caution
As for your prompt compliance.—
Gracious Heaven!
I thought a throne would give the power of blessing
Illimitable—to speak, were to make glad
All hearts. Alas! the higher we aspire,
The wider spreads beneath us the dark scene
Of human wretchedness, which even to lighten
Wants not Heaven's goodness only, but Heaven's wisdom,
While easy mischief waits on meanest minds.
The idiot with a wanton brand may fire
Th' imperial city, a base beggar's brood

Infect a paradise with pestilence,
While deep-laid schemes of princeliest goodness end
In wider evil, and thrice heavier ruin.
Ye smile to hear these solemn arguments
Upon these laughter-loving lips.

LADY ROCHFORD.

Your Highness
Is ever thus, or gladdening with your mirth
Or teaching with your wisdom.

QUEEN.

Lady Rochford,
Might I not add that thou art ever flattering?
A brother's wife should too sincerely love
To pamper a vain heart with praise.

LADY ROCHFORD (*aside*).

Still shamed
And still rebuked—curse on her proud humility!

QUEEN.

Enough of this—in truth the board that led
To this grave reasoning forces oft a smile
Even on Compassion's tearful face: the strange,
The motley groups! the doubts, the awe, the fears,
The pride of beggary! There are, who patch,
As though in honour of the royal feast,
With scarlet and rich hues their loose hung tatters;
And some will creep, as they were led to justice,
Along the hall, and the next instant pledge,
Like jovial courtiers, the Queen's health. But those

Of the old religion move me most. They steal
Reluctant with suspicious steps, each instant
Crossing themselves, to exorcise, no doubt,
The fiends beneath the board: each time they touch
Or dish or flagon, they renew the charm,
As though the viands flavour'd of rank heresy,
And 'twere a deadly sin to taste the dole
Of wicked Gospeller. Last noon came in
Two maids, whose tatter'd veils but ill conceal'd
Their wan and famine-sunken cheeks, not worn
With holy fast, but bitter withering want;
Desperate they ate, as conscious of their sin;
Anon a pattering sound of beads I heard,
A voice half breathless muttering broken Aves;
Lo, the good lady Abbess, come to save
Her soul-endanger'd charge; but, sad to tell,
The tempting fumes o'erpower'd her holy rigour,
And the grave mother to the flesh-pots fell.

ATTENDANT.

Madam, the Countess Wiltshire.

LADY WILTSHIRE.

LADY WILTSHIRE.

Dearest Anne!
My child!—Your Highness' pardon, my old lips
Will never learn th' unwonted reverence;
Still clings the old familiar fondness round me.

QUEEN.

Dear mother, have I ceased to be your child
Being a Queen? for your attendance, Ladies,
We thank you, and ere long may task your service;
But now—in truth I play the Queen but ill
Beside the cradle of my child—and thus
Within my mother's arms——

[*The Ladies retire.*

LADY WILTSHIRE.

Oh! who had thought
Our little playful Anne, all mirth and frolic,
The veriest madcap that ere made a mother
Tremble, rejoice, and smile, and weep at once,
Should sit on England's throne. Nay, if thou bribe not
My garrulous age, I may betray strange tales
Not all beseeming the high sceptred state
Of the Queen's majesty.

QUEEN.

I much mistrust you—
In truth I do.

LADY WILTSHIRE.

Well, Heaven be praised for all,
Chiefly that I and thy good Father, Anne,
Have lived with our own eyes to witness it.
And now, come when it will, thou'lt have me buried
In royal state; my funeral pomp shall have
Sceptres and royal scutcheons in its train:
I'll not endure that my base epitaph

Write me plain wife of good Sir Thomas Boleyn;
I'll be emblazed in characters of gold,
The mother of Queen Anne.

QUEEN.

Ay, in good time,
Some twenty years or more we'll think of this:
But, by my faith, best mother, there 's no joy
Of all that wait like chain'd and harness'd slaves
Around the thrones of kings—the pomp, the splendou
The hearty voice of popular acclaim,
The grave esteem of godly men, the power
Boundless of succouring the distress'd, the grace
And favour of a royal Husband, worthiest,
Were he a peasant, of our fondest dotage;
The consciousness of being an humble means
To build anew Christ's desolated Church—
There 's nought more full, sincere, and rapturous-
nought—
Than thus repaying all the pains, the prayers
Of her that bore me, nursed me, trained me up
To this high doom, making me like herself.
Mother, all other joys make my cheek smile;
But thy affectionate and blameless pride
Makes gladness speak her truer language—tears.
And here comes one will not rebuke our weeping,
My noble Rochford.

LORD ROCHFORD.

ROCHFORD.

Does your Highness pardon
This bold intrusion?

QUEEN.

I will pardon all
But this cold courteous ceremony:
I would not, Brother, for my throne, forego
My station in thy heart. Wert thou a stranger,
Thy letter'd fame had given thee entrance here.
'Tis such as thou adorn a court, less honour'd
Than honouring; for you Poets hold a court
Which whoso visits not, hath lost all title
To that nobility which lives for ages,
Where Kings are proud to enter. There 's no clime
Nor age, not even the Heaven of Heavens, but sends,
Summon'd by your plumed herald Fantasie,
Its embassage of noblest images
To do you service; and ye entertain them
Right royally, do make them move to music
That they forget the sounds of their own spheres.

ROCHFORD.

Your Highness!

QUEEN.

Nay, your Sister!

ROCHFORD.

Sweet rebuke:

Dear Sister, I've been toiling in your service,
Or rather turning toil to sweet delight;
I've been enriching my rude verse with thoughts
I stole from thee in that religious converse
We held some days ago, when we discuss'd
The vain idolatries of Rome, adoring
With disproportionate and erring reverence
The Holy Virgin. I've a hymn, methinks
Will not offend.—Will't please your Highness hear it?

QUEEN.

Most willingly, it suits the hour—for eve,
That steals so softly on the quiet world,
Seems made for solemn music, even as nature
Breathed silence over all in earth and Heaven,
Vocal alone with grateful man's thanksgiving.

ROCHFORD.

Here—call Mark Smeaton, bid him bring his lute.

THE ABOVE, SMEATON.

ROCHFORD.

Now, boy, that tune I told thee of within;
And look thou touch it masterly: her Grace
Hath that nice ear that vibrates to the touch
Of harmony, so tremblingly alive
The slightest discord jars on it like anguish.
Not with that shaking hand—
Look, the Queen smiles.
Right, boy, thou own'st that inspiration.

THE PROTESTANT'S HYMN TO THE VIRGIN.

I.

Oh! Virgin Mother! not with choral hymn
Around the lamp-deck'd altar high and dim,
Where silver bells are faintly ringing,
And odorous censers lightly swinging;
Till blazing forth above, beneath, around,
Rolls the full organ's never-ceasing sound:
Not with the costly gift of gold and gem,
Where thy enshrined image stands,
Loveliest, though fram'd by daring human hands,
And halo'd with thy sun-like diadem:
Not with the deep devotion of the heart,
Close folded arms across the heaving breast,
And words that find no breath, and sighs supprest—
Mary, we seek not thee
With suppliant agony
Of burning tears, that all unbidden start;
To mortal name our jealous souls deny
The incommunicable meed of Deity.

II.

And thou, where'er thy everlasting seat—
If ever human prayer, with noise unmeet,
Up to thy radiant throne on high,
Ascend through the reluctant sky;

Or earthly music its fond notes intrude
Upon the silence of beatitude:
Lowliest as loveliest among mortal maids!
With all the grief that may abate
The changeless bliss of thy empyreal state,
Ever thy sad dejected look upbraids
The misdirected homage, vain and blind;
Aside thou turnest thy offended ears
Where one Hosanna fills th' acclaiming spheres;
Oh! conscious child of Eve,
Mary, thy soul doth grieve
At godhead's sacred rite to thee assign'd;
Mourning the rash unholy injury done
To the redeeming name of thy Almighty Son!

III.

Yet ne'er Incarnate Godhead might reside,
Save where his conscious presence glorified;
Thee, therefore, lovelier far we deem
Than eye may see or soul may dream.
Unchanged—unwasted by the pains of earth,
Thou didst bring forth the fair immortal birth:
And Hope and Faith, and deep maternal Joy,
And Love, and not unholy Pride,
With soft unevanescent glory dyed
Thy cheeks, while gazing on the peerless boy;
And surer than prophetic consciousness,
That he was born all human-kind to bless!

The musical and peopled air was dim,
Mary, where'er thy haunt,
With angels visitant,
Nor always did the viewless Seraphim
Stand with their plumed glories unconfest,
To see the Eternal Child while cradled on thy breast.

IV.

And what, though in the winter, bleak and wild,
Thou didst bring forth the unregarded child,
The summon'd star made haste to shine
Upon that new-born face divine,
And the low dwelling of the stabled beast
Shone with the homage of the gorgeous East.
Though driven far off to Nilus' reedy shore,
As thou didst slake thy burning feet,
Where o'er the desert fount the arching palm-trees meet:
Still its soft pillow'd charge thy bosom bore;
And thou didst watch in rapture his sweet sleep;
Or gaze, while sportive he thy locks carest,
Or drank the living fountain of thy breast.
Yet, Mary, o'er thy soul
A silent sadness stole,
Nor could thy swelling eyes refuse to weep,
For Rachel, desolate, in agony,
And Bethlehem's mothers childless all but thee.

V.

Nor fail'd thy watchful spirit to behold
The secret inborn Deity unfold:
Nor e'er without a painless awe,
The wonderous youth the mother saw;
For in the Baptist's playful love appear'd
The homage of a heart that almost fear'd:
And though in meek subjection still he dwelt
Beneath thy husband's lowly home;
Oft from his lips would words mysterious come;
The soul untaught the present Saviour felt.
As more than prophet raptures o'er him broke,
And fuller still the inspiration pour'd,
Half-bow'd to earth unconscious knees ador'd:
Mary, before thy sight,
The wonder-working might,
Prerogative of highest Godhead woke;
Unfearful yet!—when instant at his sign,
The water vessels blush'd with generous wine.

VI.

Blest o'er all women! did thy heart repress,
Humble as chaste, each thought of loftiness,
When wonder after wonder burst
Around the child thy bosom nurst;—
The dumb began to sing, the lame to leap;
His unwet footsteps trod the unyielding deep;

Still at his word disease and anguish ceased,
And healthful blood began to flow,
Ruddy, beneath the leper's skin of snow;
And shuddering fiends the tortured soul released;
And from the grave arose the summon'd dead?
Yet, ah! did ne'er thy mother's heart repine,
When he set forth upon his dread design?
Mary, did ne'er thy love
His piteous fate reprove,
When on the rock reposed his houseless head?
Seem'd it not strange to thy officious zeal—
All pains, all sorrows, save his own, to heal?

VII.

Yet, oh! how awful, Desolate! to thee,
Thus to have shrined the living Deity!
When underneath the loaded Rood,
Forlorn the childless mother stood:
Then when that voice, whose first articulate breath
Thrill'd her enraptured ear, had now in death
Bequeath'd her to his care whom best he loved;
When the cold death-dew bathed his brow,
And faint the drooping head began to bow,
Wert thou not, saddest, too severely proved?
As in thy sight each rigid limb grew cold,
And the lip whiten'd with the burning thirst,
And the last cry of o'erwrought anguish burst,
Where then the Shiloh's crown,
Mary, the Christ's renown,

By Prophets and Angelic harps foretold?
Was strength to thy undoubting spirit given?
Or did not human love o'erpower thy trust in Heaven?

VIII.

But when Death's conqueror from the tomb return'd,
Was thine the heart that at his voice ne'er burn'd?
Follow'd him not thy constant sight,
Slow melting in Heaven's purest white,
To take his ancient endless seat on high,
On the right hand of Parent Deity?
And when thine earthly pilgrimage was ended,
We deem not, but that circled round,
With ringing harps of Heaven's most glorious sound,
Thy spirit, redeem'd through thy Son's blood, ascended:
There evermore in lowliest loftiness,
Meek thou admirest, how that living God,
That fills the Heavens and Earth, in thee abode.
Mary, we yield to thee
All but idolatry;
We gaze, admire, and wonder—love and bless:
Pure, blameless, holy, every praise be thine,
All honour save thy Son's, all glory but divine.

SCENE.—*The Palace of the Bishop of Winchester.*

ANGELO.

More blood! more blood!—three noble brethren more,
From the Carthusian's decimated house,*
Doom'd to the block—ay, pour it forth like water!
Make your Thames red, till your proud galleys plough
Their way, and leave a sanguine wake behind them:
Set wide the gates of Hell, and summon thence
Murder, enthron'd on your high judgment seat!
Arm her dark sister, lawless Massacre,
With the dread axe of public Execution!
Can Hell, or Earth's confederate Kings prevail
'Gainst the true Church?—But, oh! ye martyr'd souls!
Spirits, with whose saintly blood their robes are wet—
Oh! all-accomplish'd More, and sainted Fisher,
Rejoice ye not that with your death ye rouse
The fire-wing'd ministers of Heaven's just wrath,
That welcoming your souls to th' abode of bliss,
Stand with spread wings, and ready girt for vengeance!
But ye, the pulpit Captains of the Schism,
Worse than the worst—soul murderers, Hell's Apostles—

* The execution of the Prior and several of the Brethren of the Carthusian Monastery for denying the King's Supremacy, was amongst the most barbarous transactions of this period, the chief guilt of which must be attributed to the unrelenting disposition of the King.

Ye would pour oil into the Church's wounds
That your own parricide hands have rent, and think
They will not plead against you.—Oh! ye blind
To earthly wisdon as Heaven's light, that dare not
Greatly to sin, or, politicly severe,
Crush where ye conquer—ye will stand aloof
From the black scaffold, preach, protest, forswear
All deeds of blood; yet your infected cause
Shall smell of it to latest generations!
Oh fools! to plunge in internecine strife,
Yet pause, and fear to slay:—deserving none,
And, by Heaven's throne! receiving none, to dream
Of showing mercy; either way ye perish,
Or shed the martyrs' blood, whose dying voices
Arm Earth, Hell, Heaven, 'gainst your ungodly cause;
Abstain, the uncheck'd recoil of our fierce vengeance
Shall sweep you to the appointed pit of Hell!

ANGELO, GARDINER.

ANGELO.

My Lord of Winchester, thou hast received
Our full credentials from St. Peter's chair?

GARDINER.

Brother in Christ, thou know'st this land rejects
Rome's Bishop and his tyrannous usurpation.

ANGELO.

That Stephen Gardiner owns no power in Rome

I know, nor yet in England. What cares he
For King or Pontiff, so he may maintain
The proud supremacy of Stephen Gardiner.
A second, but a greater Wolsey, thou,
With thine unbounded soul, would'st rule o'er all—
Church, State, the world——

GARDINER.

Italian, thou'rt too bold——

ANGELO.

Too true, good Islander! But think not, Gardiner,
I or lament or deprecate thy greatness.
What qualities that make man fit to rule
Meet not in Winchester's capacious soul?
The statesman's large and comprehensive mind;
The politician's keen prophetic eye;
The scholar's mastery o'er the realm of knowledge;
Smooth manners, that with courtly art persuade;
The eloquent pen, pregnant with thought profound;
Quickness to penetrate each dark design;
Sagacity to wind the unwilling soul
To his own purpose: wisest in the council;
Deep read in books—in man's dark heart still deeper;
Most knowing in all Europe's courts. Blest England,
If she but prize his worth; himself most blest,
If but to his own interests blind he err not
On his ascendant path——

GARDINER.

Your meaning, brother?

ANGELO.

A Churchman, and abase the Church's rule!
To wrest the thunder from his awful grasp,
Whose delegates are we, as he is Heaven's,
And place it in the temporal tyrant's hands,
That hath no scope nor end but his own pride
And carnal lust of sway! Rome covets power,
But for her sons, with wholesome tyranny,
To their own weal, to govern kings and nations.
Oh! traitor to thy people, King, and God,
As to thyself! to cast away the sceptre
That sways man's soul to his immortal vantage!
Son of the Holy Church, I exorcise
The fiend of disobedience from thine heart;
By all thou lov'st—pomp, majesty, dominion,
By all thou hat'st—th' apostate cause and crew,
Th' all powerful Cranmer!—ay, I see thy cheek
Blanch, thy low quivering lip—by all thou fear'st,
By all thou hop'st, thou'rt ours, thou'rt Rome's, thou'rt Heaven's!

GARDINER.

Good Father, walls have ears—the treacherous air,
With terrible delation, wanders round
The thrones of Kings.

ANGELO.

Thou think'st not, I or Rome
Would urge a rashness, which might wreck our cause:
Would have thee cast this wise dissembling off,

By which thou hast won the easy confidence
Of foolish heretics: be supple still,
And, seeming true, thou'rt worthier of our trust.
We know thy heart our own, and lend awhile
Thy tongue, thy pen, to the proud King, t' abase him
To a more abject slave of thee and Rome.
Now hear me, Prelate, glut thine ear with tidings,
For there are dark and deep delved plots, that 'scape
Even Gardiner's lynx-eyed sight—thy soul shall laugh.
The Queen—the Boleyn—the false harlot heretic—
She 's in our toils—lost, doom'd——

GARDINER.

I know the King
Is fallen away to a new lust, and hates
Where once he doted.—But her death!—

ANGELO.

What! versed
In courts like Gardiner, and not know how close
Death waits upon the blasting hate of Kings?
I tell thee, she shall die—die on a scaffold!
Die branded like a base adulteress!—
Die like a heretic—the Church's foe!—
Die unabsolved, unhousel'd—die for ever!

GARDINER.

Ay, but her blameless life; the love she wins
By subtle sorcery from every rank,

ANGELO.

Blameless!—a heretic avow'd, proclaim'd,

The nursing mother of Apostasy!
Heap crime on crime, load all her soul with blackness,
Make her name hideous to the end of time;
Yet is she not, to a true son of the Church,
More odious, more abominable. All sins
Are in that one! Adultery, murder, nought
Is wanting but desire or meet occasion,
And the loose heart gives way.

GARDINER.

But this Jane Seymour
Is of no better brood.

ANGELO.

What reck we who
Or what she is; she shall give place t' another,
Another still, till the fierce flame burns out;
And shame, remorse, and horror, all the furies
That howl and madden round the guilty bed,
Seize on the abject Monarch! He shall lick
The dust beneath our feet, and pay what price
The Church ordains, for tardy reconcilement.

GARDINER.

Brother, draw near! thy speech hath bodied forth
What hath come floating o'er my secret thought.

ANGELO.

And own'st thou not Heaven's manifest inspiration?

GARDINER.

So *thou* wilt bring to pass what Gardiner left
In unaccomplish'd vision! Man of men,

What fame shall wait, what canonizing glory,
On sainted Angelo!

ANGELO.

While Stephen Gardiner
Must sink into the baser rank. Oh! fear not,
Nor jealously mistrust me, lest I cross
Thy upward path: I have forsworn the world,
Not with the formal oaths that burst like flax,
But those that chain the soul with triple iron.
Earth hath no guerdon I may covet, none
I may enjoy.—Thou, Stephen Gardiner,
Shalt rule submissive Prelates, Peers, and Kings,
Loftiest in station, as in mind the mightiest;
And a perpetual noon of golden power
Shall blaze around thy lordly mitred state.
I'm girt for other journeys: at that hour,
When all but crown'd the righteous work, this Isle
Half bow'd again to the Holy See, I go
Far in some savage land unknown, remote
From civilized or reasonable life,
From letters, arts—where wild men howl around
Their blood-stain'd altars—to uplift th' unknown,
Unawful Crucifix: I go to pine
With famine; waste with slow disease; the loathing
And scorn of men. And when thy race is run,
Thou, Winchester, in marble cemetery,
Where thy cathedral roof, like some rich grove,
Spreads o'er, and all the walls with 'scutcheons blaze,

Shalt lie; while anthem'd choirs and pealing organs,
And incense clouds, and a bright heaven of lamps,
Shall solemnize thy gorgeous obsequies.
O'er my unsepulchred and houseless bones,
Cast on the barren beach of the salt sea,
Or arid desert, where the vulture flaps
Her dreary wings, shall never wandering Priest
Or bid his beads, or say one passing pray'r.
Thy memory shall live in this land's records
While the sea girds the isle; but mine shall perish
As utterly as some base beggar's child
That unbaptiz'd drops like abortive fruit
Into unhallow'd grave.

GARDINER.

Impossible!
Rome cannot waste on such wild service minds
Like thine, nor they endure the base obedience.

ANGELO.

Man of this world, thou know'st not those who tread
The steps of great Ignatius, those that bear
The name of Jesus and his Cross. I 've sunk,
For ever, title, rank, wealth—even my being;
And, self annihilated, boast myself
A limb, a nameless limb, of that vast body
That shall bespread the world, uncheck'd, untrac'd—
Like God's own presence, every where, yet no where—
Th' invisible control, by which Rome rules
The universal mind of man. On me

My Father's palace gates no more shall open,
I own no more my proud ancestral name,
I have no property even in these weeds,
These coarse and simple weeds I wear; nor will,
Nor passion, nor affection, nor the love
Of kindred touch this earth-estranged heart;
My personal being is absorbed and dead.
Thou think'st it much with cilice, scourge, and fast
To macerate thy all-too pamper'd body,
That thy sere heart is seal'd to woman's love,
That child shall never climb thy knees, nor call thee
His father:—on the altar of my God
I 've laid a nobler sacrifice, a soul
Conscious it might have compass'd empire.—This
I 've done; and in no brief and frantic fit
Of youthful lust ungratified—in the hour
Of disappointed pride. A noble born
Of Rome's patrician blood, rich, lettered, versed
In the affairs of men; no monkish dreamer
Hearing Heaven's summons in ecstatic vision.
God spoke within this heart but with the voice
Of stern deliberate duty, and I rose
Resolved to sail the flood, to tread the fire—
That 's nought—to quench all natural compunction,
To know nor right nor wrong, nor crime nor virtue,
But as subservient to Rome's cause and Heaven's.
I 've school'd my haughty soul to subtlest craft,
I 've strung my tender heart to bloodiest havoc,

And stand prepared to wear the martyr's flames
Like nuptial robes;—far worse, to drag to the stake
My friend, the brother of my soul—if thus
I sear the hydra heads of heresy.

GARDINER.

Think not thine order, brother, nor thy tenets,
Sublime as that unquestioning devotion
With which God's Seraphim perform his mandates,
Unknown, unnoticed, unobserved. I lay
The volume of this heart, that man ne'er read,
Before thee. Here is hate of heresy,
Deep, desperate as thine own. In the dead night,
And in the secret prayers of my dark chamber,
Like thee I cry, "Holy and True, how long—"
Oh! when will they blaze up and gladden heaven,
The glorious purifying fires, and purge
The land of its pollutions? when the Church
Its pure and virgin whiteness re-array,
And its true Sons shake off dissembling darkness?

ANGELO.

Oh! Gardiner, beware! No lust of vengeance,
No carnal hate, nor hope of worldly triumph,
Must leaven our heroic zeal: God's will
Its sole commission, its sole end God's glory.
We must gird up our souls to this high service,
Alike subdue and bend our pride and passions
To our great scope; with nought too stern or dread

But that we 'll on relentless, nought too base
But we will stoop—much is already done—

GARDINER.

Enough, I ask no more, would know no more.
I'll stand aloof, and wait in holy hope
Th' appointed hour.

ANGELO.

In safety reap the harvest
Sown in the sweat of other's brows. 'Tis well,
Thus shall it be, thus best the cause will prosper;
And, prosper but the cause, my work is done.

Whitehall.

QUEEN (*dismissing her ladies*).

Away—we are not used to order twice;
Away—depart.—
I am alone—alone—
Nor that cold hateful pomp of fawning faces
Pursues me, nor the true officious love
Of those whose hearts I would not wring, by seeming
The wretch I am: so pour thee forth, mine heart,
Pour thy full tide of bitterness; for Queens
Must weep in secret when they weep. I saw it—
'Twas no foul vision—with unblinded eyes
I saw it: his fond hands, as once in mine,
Were wreath'd in hers; he gazed upon her face

Even with those fatal eyes, no woman looks at—
I know it! ah! too well—nor madly dote.
That eloquence, the self-same burning words
That seize the awe-struck soul, when weakest, thrill'd
Her vainly-deaf averted ears.—Oh, Heaven!
I thank thee that I cursed her not, nor him.
Jane Seymour, like a sister did I deem thee;
But what of that? Thou'rt heaven-ordain'd to visit
Her sins upon the head of her that dared
To love, to wed another's lord. May'st thou
Ne'er know the racking anguish of this hour,
The desolation of this heart! But thou,
Oh! thou, my crime, my madness! thou on whom
The loftiest woman had been proud to dote,
Had he been master of a straw-roof'd cottage!
Was 't just to awe, to dazzle the young mind,
That deem'd its transport loyal admiration,
Submissive duty all, till it awoke
And found it thrilling, deepest woman's love?
Too late, too early disabused—would Heaven
That I were still abused! Long, long I've felt
Love's bonds fall one by one from thy pall'd heart.
Oh! the fond falsehoods of my credulous soul!
War, policy, religion, all the cares
Of kingdoms, Europe's fate within thy hands,
I pleaded to myself to justify
Thy cold estrangement.

Well, 'tis o'er, and I

Must sit alone on my cold eminence,
All women's envy, mine own scorn and pity.
And all the sweetness of these virgin lips,
And all the pureness of this virgin bosom,
And all the fondness of this virgin heart,
Forgotten, turn'd to scorn—perchance to loathing.
Heaven! was no way but this, and none but He
To scourge this guilty heart? Thy will be done.
I've still a noble Father, and a Brother,
And, Powers of grace! my Mother—kill her not,
Break not her heart,—for sure 'twill break to hear it.
My child, my child, thou only wilt not feel it:
Thy parent o'er thy face may weep, nor thou
Be sadder for her misery; thou wilt love me
Though thy false father scorn and hate. My Mother—
Oh! ne'er before would I have fled thy presence:
Betray me not, my tear-swoln eyes.

QUEEN, LADY WILTSHIRE.

LADY WILTSHIRE.

Dear Anne,
I come to task thy goodness: thou must use
That witching influence none e'er resists;
That, with a sweet and pardonable treason,
Makes the King's Grace thy slave, nor leaves him pow'r
To think or speak but at thy pleasure——

QUEEN (*aside*).

Heaven!
Each word brings blood from my torn heart.

LADY WILTSHIRE.

In truth,
There never lived who could refuse thee aught;
For thou wert never known to ask amiss.
But thou'rt all tears.

QUEEN.

Nought—nought—thy story, Mother.

LADY WILTSHIRE.

Ay, nothing sure will chase away thy weakness,
Be't of the body or the mind, so soon
As that sweet consciousness that thou art using
The power Heaven gave thee in Heaven's cause. His Grace
The Primate waits without t'implore your Highness,
That the old high-born Prior of the Carthusians,
And two right noble brethren of that house,
Who, obstinate and self-will'd, still subscribe not
The King's supreme dominion, may find mercy,
Nor perish on the ignominious scaffold.

QUEEN.

My Lord of Canterbury at our door!
The presence of that righteous man, dear Mother,
Breathes sanctity as though from Heaven; our hearts
O'erflow at once with prayer and holiest thoughts.
Admit his Grace.

THE ABOVE, CRANMER.

QUEEN.

Your blessing, holy Father.

CRANMER.

Heaven save your Highness! But, remember, Lady,
Prayers of anointed Priests or mitred Prelates
Are poor and valueless to such as come
From those that wear Christ's truest livery,
The wretched and the broken-hearted.

QUEEN (*aside*).

Heaven,
I own thy voice—then mine are surely heard.

CRANMER.

I'll teach your Grace to do Heaven violence,
By shrining your blest name in vows of men,
From death released, from cruel public death.
The Countess Wiltshire hath made known our suit;
And though my soul abhors the wilful hardness
Of these proud men, yet they were nursed in error—
In error, but for all-enlightening grace,
That still had darken'd our own souls. Were Heaven
Extreme t' avenge its outraged majesty,
Would the red roaring thunder ever cease?
And shall the axe earth's injured Monarchs wield
Be never satiate with the offending blood?

QUEEN.

Had I the power!

CRANMER.

The power! thou'st ever been
The rainbow o'er the awful throne. The King,
That lives but in thy presence, ne'er disdain'd
Thy righteous supplication. Oh! great Queen,
Our cause, the Gospel cause, the cause of Christ,
Is spotted o'er with shame. Rude sacrilege
Usurps the name of godly Reformation,
And revels in the spoil of shrine and altar.
Men have cast down the incensed heathenish image
To worship with more foul idolatry
The gold of which 'twas wrought; and all the blood
The too relentless Law for Treason sheds,
Attaints our blameless faith of direst cruelty.

QUEEN (*aside*).

More woe, more woe—to know these holy hopes,
This noble trust, misplaced and frustrate all!
Your Grace o'ervalues our poor influence,
Such as it is.

LADY WILTSHIRE.

The King!

QUEEN.

I'll know the worst.
Dear Mother, leave us. Come contempt or shame,
She must not witness it: but he the rather
Will seek to compensate the heart's deep wrongs
By outward graciousness. Wretch, wretch myself,
I may relieve the wretchedness of others:—

Be't as it may, the world shall never know
Through me the secret of his sin, his falsehood;
But deem him by my love the gentlest husband
As the most noble Monarch upon Earth.

KING HENRY.

KING.

Refuse our mandate—shut their Abbey gates
Against our Poursuivants—refuse our oaths—
Now, by St. Paul, not one of them shall wear
His shaven crown on his audacious shoulders!

CRANMER.

Your Majesty will hear your faithful servant.

KING.

I'll none of it—their heads or their allegiance.
God's death! have all our Parliament and Peers,
Our Rev'rend Bishops, given their hands and seals,
And shall we thus be mock'd and set at nought
By beggarly and barefoot monks? Archbishop,
Out of our love to thine own reverend person,
We do refuse thy most unwise petition.
Good foolish man, not one of them but, urged
By that old Priest of the Seven Hills, would burn us,
Body and soul. We'll have no Kings but one,
None but ourself.—Tut, not a word. How now!
What, Nan! what blank! what all a mort! Thy jests,
And thy quaint sayings, and thy smiles——

QUEEN.

My Liege,
I have been sued to be a suppliant
For those who, fall'n beneath thine high displeasure——

KING.

'Sdeath! ye've your answer—as I pass'd but now
Jane Seymour was set on t' entreat our mercy;
We yielded not, nor thought of being wearied
At every step with the old tedious tale—
Art answer'd?

QUEEN.

What I am, I owe your Grace,
And in most deep humility confess it;
But being as I am, your Grace's wife,
I knew not that my maid's rejected prayer
Precluded further speech——

KING.

Why, how now, wayward!
Your maid! good truth, Sir Thomas Boleyn's daughter's
Right nobly served. I'd have you know, proud woman,
What the King gives, the King may take away—
Who raised up one from dust, may raise another.
Look to thyself, I say—thou may'st have cause;
Look, and be wise—be humble. For your Grace
We've business in our Council—not a word—
Our Queen's our subject still.

QUEEN (*alone*).

And this is he,

The flower of the world's chivalry, most courtly
Where met the splendour of all courts! When Europe
Sent its three Sov'reigns to that Golden Field,
Who won all eyes with liberal noble bearing?
Who charm'd all ears with high and gracious speech?
Who made all hearts his slaves by inbred worth
But English Henry? by his pattern all
Moved, spoke, rode, tilted, shaped their dress, their language,
And he that most resembled England's King
Was kingliest in the esteem of all. This he
That lay whole hours before my worshipp'd feet,
Making the air melodious with his words?
So fearful to offend, having offended
So fearful of his pardon, not myself
More jealous of my maiden modesty;
The bridegroom of my youth, my infant's Father!
Ah me! my rash and inconsiderate speech,
My pride, hath wrought from his too hasty nature
This shame upon mine head: he'll turn, he'll come,
My prodigal, back to mine heart—if not,
I'm born his subject, sworn before high Heaven
His faithful wife; then let him cast me from him,
Spurn, trample me to dust—the foe, the stranger
That owns no law of kindred, blood, or duty,
Is taught, where every word is Heaven's own truth,
To love where most he's hated. I will live
On the delicious memory of the past,

And bless him so for my few years of bliss,
My lips shall find no time for harsh reproach,
I'll be as one of those sweet flowers that, crush'd
By the contemptuous foot, winds closer round it,
And breathes in every step its richest odours.

An Apartment in Westminster.

ANGELO, LADY ROCHFORD.

ANGELO.

In that proud Prelate's heart a noble chord
I touch'd, now harp we on a baser string.
The Lady Rochford! * thou art here to tell me
That thou fulfill'st the terms on which the Church,
In its high plenitude of power, absolves
The guilty soul.

LADY ROCHFORD.

I come, Sir, to advise
With your wise sanctity.

ANGELO.

We've judged already,
And look but for obedience—hast thou scatter'd
Those hints and seeds of hate in the King's path,
That he behold this Queen in her true colours?

* All writers agree in the unprincipled and unnatural character of the Countess of Rochford, who suffered at a subsequent period for being accessary to the criminal conduct of Queen Catherine Howard.

LADY ROCHFORD.

I have; with zeal so fatal, with success
So manifest, mine inmost soul recoils
At the base service.

ANGELO.

Hast obtain'd that paper
In Lady Wingfield's hand?

LADY ROCHFORD.

'Tis here.

ANGELO.

Good! good!—

LADY ROCHFORD.

Inexorable!—must I show no mercy?
Must crime be still atoned by crime? Oh! think,
She is my husband's sister—his, the bridegroom
Of my fond youth——

ANGELO.

To whom thou art so true
And faithful!

LADY ROCHFORD.

Ha! what need of words to thee,
That read'st the inmost depths of this dark heart
More clearly than myself—I hate that husband,
For that I've injured him so deeply; hate
Her virtue that reproaches mine own shame:
But yet to slander her pure fame——

ANGELO.

You said
Erewhile you doubted her yourself.

LADY ROCHFORD.

The sinful
Have a base interest to drag down the holy
To their own level. Set me some strange penance,
To grind the flesh, and wring the heart's-blood forth;
Oh! anything but this base wicked service!

ANGELO.

Thou wilt do all but what the Church commands.
What is it for a life like thine—a life
That doth confess, bewail, forswear its sins,
But with new zest t' indulge—that com'st so oft
With the foul tale, that I do fear to breathe
The tainted air of my confessional?
For such a life is not that place ordain'd
Where air is fire, life pain, and language howling?

LADY ROCHFORD.

Oh! horror!

ANGELO.

Look that thou perform our bidding
To the strict letter, the extremest point,
Wary and secret, as becomes a servant
Would merit grace and favour.

LADY ROCHFORD.

I'm no servant—
A slave—a lash'd, a crouching, abject slave,
In the iron bondage of my sins!

ANGELO.

Ungrateful!

When I might hurl thee, black with malediction,
Where all thy direst visions of remorse,
The racking moments of remember'd crime,
The fangs of Conscience tearing at thy heart,
Thy tossing, feverish, spectre-staring midnights,
Would seem remission, peace, delight to years
Interminable——

LADY ROCHFORD.

Oh! my soul! my soul!

ANGELO.

And I have taught thee how to merit favour
From those to whom the eternal keys are given—
Tinged thy black desperation with the hue
Of hope——Away! back to thy duty—watch!
And those who weigh in the everlasting scales
Service against rebellion, and obedience
Against transgression, may at length strike down
The balance, and pronounce thee what thou dar'st not—
Thou dost not—hope may be thy lot.—Away!

The Garden, as before.

MARK SMEATON, MAGDALENE SMEATON.

MAGDALENE.

My brother!

MARK.

Oh! her voice—it will not cease—
It sounds within my ears, within my heart.

And thou, my harp, once loved, but now a treasure
Which kingdoms will not buy; of her sweet tones
Thou'lt keep the perfume, as the Arabian air
The smell of spices.

MAGDALENE.

Mark, thou'rt strangely moved;
Speak to me—keep from her no jealous secret,
From her who loves thee with so whole a heart,
Nor thy unkindness, were 't in thy soft nature;
Nor sorrows, they would but endear thee more;
Nor even thy sins, if that way I could fear thee,
Could e'er estrange——

MARK.

The Queen! the Queen! my sister:
She sent for me—she made me sit before her.
As my hand trembled on my lute, she smiled
With gracious playfulness—oh! what a store
Of precious memories I've treasured up—
Look, motion, word, like relics, have I shrined them
In the heart's sanctuary, where all my thoughts
Shall come in daily pilgrimage devout,
Till I am dust and clay. I miserable!
With such a refuge! sinful, with the power
Of her controlling holiness about me!

MAGDALENE.

Oh! brother, brother, my misgiving heart
Recoils, it knows not why, from words that sound
Like dangerous profanation: I have forsworn

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Antioch

Published 1840 by John Murray, Albemarle Street

All love but that of holiest cloister'd maids
Before the bleeding crucifix; but yet
I feel that there is sin in thy wild language,
Sin, not less deep in thought because in deed
Impossible.—'Lo! Father Angelo.

MARK.

This awful man again!—must we ne'er meet
But his appalling look, inscrutable
Yet scrutinizing all, must cite to judgment
Each passing thought, each word, each wish——

MAGDALENE.

Mark, Mark,
Do any but the guilty dread the presence
Of holiest men? He comes to visit here
The mother of my youth, whose outcast age
Hath none but me, of all our scatter'd convent,
To smooth her dying pillow, watch her wants;
And none but Father Angelo t' attend her,
So constantly as though no soul but hers
Needed his zealous function.

ANGELO, THE ABOVE.

ANGELO.

So, fair youth,
Our prophecies fall true—thou 'rt i' the sunshine.
Last eve, I ask not, if the dangerous song
Beseem'd a son of Holy Church—that sin
Be theirs not thine.

MARK.

How knew he this?

ANGELO.

Had those
Who take in charge th' eternal souls of men,
No ways of knowledge to the vulgar eye
Inscrutable, our task were ill fulfill'd.
So tell me, youth, and look that thou speak truth,
Truth to the word, the letter, even the tone—
Fell no peculiar private passages,
Nor word, nor sign, nay, nor familiar motion,
Emphatic tone, nor more expressive pause,
Between thyself and the Queen's Grace?

MARK.

Good Sir,
Think on my baseness and her state——

ANGELO.

So young
And so dishonest! Boy, look to't! Thy soul,
Thy soul, that lives in bliss or dies for ever,
Is on the hazard (but I speak in love,
And not in anger), spake she not more gently?
Glanced not her eye more kindly than 'twas wont?
Drank not her ears thy songs with longer rapture?
Awes not her presence less, and charms the more?—
Boy, boy, take heed—be warn'd, be wise.

MARK.

Sir, Sir,

Is't possible, in human nature! where,
In history or legend, wild and marvellous,
Is't written, that a Queen—a Queen like her—
The Queen of Queens in beauty and in goodness,
Stoop'd to consider one like me?

ANGELO.

This life
Hath strange vicissitudes. This Queen, this partner
Of England's throne, I can remember well,
The Duchess of Alençon once esteem'd
Of note scarce higher in her royal court
Than thou in England's—so, once more, beware.
There is no price man's enemy will not pay
For one immortal soul. Now, the good Abbess—
Daughter, advance—how fares it with your charge?

MAGDALENE.

Sir, longing for your presence, as the blind
For light: your holy words breathe deeper calmness
O'er all her frame, than medicine's opiate drugs;
Her only fear of death is lest she want
Your parting benediction.

ANGELO.

In—I'll follow.

MARK.

Will he not warn me not to wing the air,
Lest I should fly too near the parching Sun,
And shrivel into dust?—To doubt his wisdom
Were to impeach man's general estimate;

T' arraign his charity would give the lie
To a whole life of painful sanctity,
And slur th' anointed Priesthood with contempt.
Yet her—of her to speak, to think, t' imagine
Less than the purest, chastest, holiest, best—
An Angel, but without an Angel's wings,
Lest, weary of this tainting world, she fly
Untimely to her native skies; and I,
A poor, unknown, a homeless, friendless boy——
The more I think the wilder grow my thoughts,
And every thought is stamp'd with her bright image;
She is my world of fantasy, each sound
Is as her voice, each gleam of light her look,
And midnight hath no vision but of her.

Whitehall.

QUEEN AND LADIES,
SIR HENRY NORREYS, SIR FRANCIS WESTON, SIR WILLIAM BRERETON, MARK SMEATON.

NORREYS.

Your Majesty will grace the tilt to-day?

QUEEN.

The King so wills it: mine obedience rather
Than mine own humour sways my choice.

NORREYS.

I had dared
To hope that he your Grace has deign'd to name

Your Knight, being Champion of the ring, your Highness
Had given him victory by your presence.

QUEEN.

Norreys,
Trust me, I wish thee all that proud success
Thy valour and thy truth deserve.

NORREYS.

That wish
Is triumph—and my vaunting adversaries
Are strewn already at my feet.

QUEEN.

Sir Henry,
Such language breathes of the blithe air of France;
It brings back recollections of my youth,
When all my life was like a jocund dream,
Or air of gayest music:—but, time presses—
So, Gentlemen, in the old Knightly phrase,
Go bear you bravely for your Mistress' sake.

WESTON.

Our Mistress thus commanding, what true Knight
Can fail or falter?

QUEEN.

Courteous words, Sir Francis;
But I mistake me or that name calls up
Another—and, in truth, a fairer lady.

WESTON.

Not—as I live.

QUEEN.

Take heed! false oath false Knight:
Enough of this—

NORREYS.

We kiss your Highness' hands,
And with this talisman of strength set forth.

QUEEN.

Heaven prosper you!

[MARK SMEATON *kneels also.*

How now! thou 'rt over-bold:
Thou dost forget thy rank and station, youth!
Thou 'rt not, I deem, of gentle blood.

MARK.

No, no,
A look suffices me.*

QUEEN.

Truth, noble Sirs,
Your gallantry 's infectious; this poor youth
Must needs admire and imitate your courtesies:
Take heed that thou offend no more—be modest,
As thou wert wont. And now to horse, Sir Knights—
Go forward, and Heaven speed the brave and noble!
So now to Greenwich, to look gay and light
As this May morning, with a heart as heavy
As dull November; to be thought the happiest,
Be the most wretched of all womankind. [*Exeunt.*

* This speech and conduct of Smeaton was one of the suspicious incidents adduced on the trial of the Queen.

Near Whitehall.

GARDINER AND ANGELO.

ANGELO.

My Lord of Winchester—thou 'st seen the King?

GARDINER.

I 've seen a raging madman loose; he came
From Greenwich at full speed; their horses seem'd
Like those who ride for life from a lost battle:—
What hath befallen?

ANGELO.

The game is won ere played!
It fires beyond our hopes, the sulphurous train
Flames up, they 're hurl'd aloft, but not to Heaven.
Wake, Hell! and lift thy gates; and ye, that tenant
The deepest, darkest, most infuriate pit,
Th' abyss of all abysses, blackest blackness,
Where that most damning sin, the damning others,
With direst, most remorseless expiation,
Howls out its drear eternity, arouse
The myriad voices of your wailing; loud
As when the fleshly Luther, or the chief
Of his cursed crew have one by one gone down
To tread your furnace chambers!—Rise! prepare
The throne of fire, the crown of eating flames!
She comes—the Queen, the fatal Queen, whose beauty
Hath been to England worse, more full of peril,

Than Helen's was to Troy, hath seal'd for death,
For death eternal, irremediable,
Whole generations of her godless sons,
And made her stately church a heap of ruin!

GARDINER.

I am no heretic: why keep me thus
Upon the rack?

ANGELO.

When slightest accidents
Lead to effects that change the doom of nations,
Dost thou not read the visible hand of Heaven?

GARDINER.

Who questions it?

ANGELO.

Why then behold—adore it!
My Lord, we're wise and politic, but yet
A foolish kerchief falling to the ground
Shall more advance our high and righteous cause
Than months of subtlest craft.

GARDINER.

Explain.

ANGELO.

I stood
Within the tilt-yard, not to take delight
Carnal, unpriestly, in the worldly pageant:
Though, Heaven forgive me! when the trumpets blew,
And the lists fell, and Knights as brave, and full
Of valour as their steeds of fire, wheel'd forth,

And moved in troops or single, orderly
As youths and maidens in a village dance,
Or shot, like swooping hawks, in straight career;
The old Caraffa rose within my breast—
Struggled my soul with haughty recollections
Of when I rode through the outpour'd streets of Rome,
Enamouring all the youth of Italy
With envy of my noble horsemanship.
But I rebuked myself, and thought how Heaven
Had taught me loftier mastery, to rein
And curb with salutary governance
Th' unmanaged souls of men. But to our purpose;
Even at the instant, when all spears were levell'd,
And rapid as the arblast bolt the Knights
Spurr'd one by one to the ring, when breathless leant
The Ladies from their galleries—from the Queen's
A handkerchief was seen to fall; but while
Floating it dallied on the air, a Knight,
Sir Henry Norreys, as I learnt, stoop'd down,
Caught, wreath'd it in his plume, regain'd his spear,
And smote right home the quivering ring: th' acclaim
Burst forth like roaring waters, but the King
Sprang up, and call'd to horse, while tumult wild
Broke up the marr'd and frighted ceremony.

GARDINER.

Something of this I augur'd: as the King
Swept furious by, he beckon'd me; yet seem'd
Too busied with his wrathful thoughts to heed

Whom thus he summon'd; and I heard him mutter
"The saucy groom!" and terms, which to repeat
Were not o'erfitting priestly lips, but coupled
With the Queen's name most strangely. Seeing this,
I thought it in mine office to administer
Grave ghostly admonition, mingled well
With certain homily and pulpit phrases
Of man's ingratitude, and gracious Kings
Whose bounties are abused; the general looseness
Of the age. The more I spake, the more he madden'd,
As though my words were oil on fire.

ANGELO.

'Twas well,
But must be better; I have further tidings.
I pass'd the Tower, and saw Sir William Kingston,
Summon'd, 'twas said, with special haste, come forth
Among his archers.

GARDINER.

Ha! there 's more in this.

ANGELO.

Prelate, there shall be—where 's the King?

GARDINER.

I left him
Near the apartment of Jane Seymour.

ANGELO.

Good!
The field of battle where we have them all
At vantage.—Lead me to him.

GARDINER.

Thee?

ANGELO.

What! jealous still? Then go thyself—be speedy.
Thou lovest the King, my Lord of Winchester:
Suits it thy reverence, then, and holy station,
Nearest his heart, and in his closest councils,
That he retain a wanton in his bosom,
When there is one hath damning evidence
At peril of his life?

GARDINER.

Where? who?

ANGELO.

The Man
Am I.——Thou see'st, my Lord, thine all the glory,
The gratitude for this great service—mine
The peril. Strike, strike now, strike home, my Lord.

GARDINER.

I see it: as we pass, thou shalt unfold
All that remains behind; and, trust me, Brother,
Thou shalt have thy reward.

ANGELO.

I shall—in Heaven.

Whitehall.

QUEEN.

What can it mean? Each face as I pass'd by
Was gathering blackness; and a silent pity
Sate upon brows that turn'd aside to avoid me.
The menials are infected: not a groom,
As I descended from my litter, lent
His hand to aid me; and my ante-rooms
Are mute and empty, even as though the plague
Had tainted all the air. Well, what of this?—
Oh, God of Grace! thou'rt bounteous still! Fall off
The cumbrous trappings and appendages
Of mine uneasy state, thou leav'st me yet
One far too old, and one too young to change:
My child, my Mother, and my Innocence,
Shall make me up a blest society,
An Empress girt about with handmaid-queens
Might envy.—At her charge I left my Mother,
Her charge, whose joy renews her youth, and makes her
Like some fond nurse o'er her first born——

LADY WILTSHIRE.

LADY WILTSHIRE.

Come, come,
She sleeps—thyself, dear Anne, not half so lovely:
Come its b[redacted] and gaze on her, for hours,

For days: a violet on a bed of snow,
A pearl in ivory set, the brightest star
Where all are bright, in the soft milky way—
There 's no similitude she doth not shame.
Her forehead arch'd by Heaven to fit a crown!
I've almost wish'd thou ne'er shouldst bear a boy,
Dear Anne, to bar her from the throne she 's born to.

QUEEN.

Mother, I follow thee.

THE ABOVE, KINGSTON AND GUARD.

QUEEN.

Ha! in my chamber
Arm'd men! Sir William Kingston, thou 'rt o'er bold
To press unbidden on our privacy.

KINGSTON.

By the King's special mandate I attach
Your Highness.

QUEEN.

Stay, Sir, as you hope for mercy.
My mother! she is old and fond—her heart
Will break. Dear Mother—back—go back—the King,
Willing to do your daughter honour, sends
Good Kingston and his guard. God pardon me!
The first untruth that e'er defiled my lips.
Now, Sir, your message: the King's Grace, I heard,
In his displeasure for some weighty cause,
Commands his Queen to prison; I obey, Sir.

KINGSTON.

Your majesty must hold yourself in readiness
T' embark on the instant for the Tower.

QUEEN.

The Tower!
Oh, mother! mother! that the time should come
When I should wish thee in thy quiet grave.
My child—that I should wish thee yet unborn;—
Shall I find justice, Sir? *

KINGSTON.

The meanest subject
In all the realm would not impeach the equity
Of the King's Grace with such a dangerous doubt.
Your Highness!

QUEEN.

Start ye thus to see me laugh?
There 's laughter that is grief's most bitter language,
Laughter that hath no mirth—and such is mine.
Lieutenant of the Tower, I tell thee this:
I 've done, Sir, in my days, some good, through Christ;
If they misjudge my cause, yea, but a jot,
The fiery indignation from above
Shall blast the bosom of this land, the skies
Shall be as brass, nor rain nor drop of dew
Shall moisten the adust and gaping earth.

---

* This singular conduct and language of Anne when she was arrested is strictly historical. See Burnet's History of the Reformation.

KINGSTON.

I would beseech your Highness to compose
Your too distemper'd mind.

QUEEN.

Where are the Bishops,
The holy Bishops? They will plead my cause,
And make my enemies kneel at my footstool.
I needs must laugh, Sir, but I 'll weep anon,
Weep floods, weep life blood, weep till every heart
Shall ache and burst to see me. Now I 'll kneel—
Behold me kneel!—and imprecate Heaven's vengeance
If I 'm not guiltless. Come—away—away—
Is your barge ready? Sooner to my judgment,
Sooner to my deliverance.—So, back
To those I dare not name, I dare not think of.

The Garden as before.

ANGELO, MARK SMEATON.

ANGELO.

Good youth, I know not if it grieve me more,
Thy fair preferment thus is nipp'd i' the bud,
Or give me joy that thou hast 'scaped the snares
That might have limed thy soul.

MARK.

Is it then true, Sir?
Is 't possible? Thou art all truth, thou wilt not
Torture my heart with such a hideous falsehood.

There was a rude tall fellow with a halberd,
Who spake of it, and with his villainous jests
And fiendish laughter tainted the Queen's name,
Her snowy, spotless, air-embalming name!
I told him to his teeth he lied; and if
His scoffing fellows had not troop'd around him,
I'd struck him to the earth.

ANGELO.

Rash boy, beware!
This sounds like treason.

MARK.

If the King himself
Set such example to high Heaven, cast off
Its richest bounties with such insolent scorn,
What wonder if ingratitude become
The fashion of his court, and the most favour'd
Change to the blackest traitors?

ANGELO.

Mark, 'tis true
The Queen is order'd prisoner to the Tower—
Most true; yet know'st thou not the worst: the King
Has changed to such a deadly hate against her,
That she must die——

MARK.

Die! die!—No, Sir, no soul
Will load itself with such a deep damnation:
Earth would break out in execration, Heaven
With unexampled thunders interdict
The horrible sentence!

ANGELO.

Youth, I'll trust thee farther.
Come hither, close—thy love to thy lost mistress
Warrants my somewhat dangerous confidence:
She stands between the King and a new lust—
He must be widow'd, e'er his guilty heart
Glut its foul appetite.

MARK.

Oh! reverend Father,
Does not thy flesh grow cold, thy holy heart
Sicken still more and more at this bad world?
For me, for me, she will so hallow death—
She will so darken and make void this earth
At her departure—I and all true servants
Will seek out our untimely graves, to attend,
Adore her, in a better world; at least,
Not live in this, when sunless of her presence.

ANGELO.

Now, as a heretic I love her not,
But yet my charity would not she were cast,
Where she must perish body and soul in hell;
I'd have her live—live on, in shame and sorrow;
For sorrow is the mother of true penitence.

MARK.

Is there no way to save her?

ANGELO.

None.

MARK.

Then, farewell
All hope, all joy in this world's wilderness,
A barren waste of sand, the fountain dried,
That was its life and gladness.—

ANGELO.

None, but that
At which our nature shudders, which would damn
The name to blackest branded infamy,
Would peril the eternal soul, would give
The fiends such awful vantage, by a crime,
A wilful crime, so like th' accursed Judas,
That good men would not stay to seek the cause,
But heap the head with merciless execration.
Where shall we find, in these degenerate days,
Devotion more than Roman?—Who will risk
His fame, his soul, to save a woman's life,
And give a heretic time to pluck the brand
Of her lost soul out of hell fire?

MARK.

Good Father,
Wrap not thy speech in darkness.

ANGELO.

If the King,
On some just plea (and these new Gospellers
Do admit none but foul adultery)
Were but divorced—how long, how honourably
Liv'd the Imperial Catherine!—which were best—

Her spotless name be tainted, or her body
Writhe on a scaffold, and her soul in flames?

MARK.

Horrible! horrible!—to live with name
Spotted with shame, or die for aye!——

ANGELO.

E'en so—
To bear a branded life, nor maid, nor widow,
Nor wife; for who would wed a tainted outcast?
She were beneath the lowest groom.

MARK.

True, true.
On, I beseech you, Sir.

ANGELO.

Do we not force
The deadliest poison down the best-loved lips,
If, by its wholesome intervention, life
Be prison'd in the mortal frame? We hate
At first the stern physician, but erewhile
The wiser heart o'erflows with grateful love.

MARK.

Good reverend Sir, tell me at once—directly,
With no prudential riddling in thy phrase,
What must he do would save the Queen?

ANGELO.

Avouch,
And with a solemn oath, in the face of Heaven,
That they have done together that foul sin
That taints the lips to speak, the heart to think on.

MARK.

Oh! but 't must be a nobler perjury.
Who would believe th' impossible falsity
Averr'd by base lips?

ANGELO.

Those that would fain
Believe, are ne'er o'er-nice or scrupulous.

MARK.

Too much at once, with falsehood to blaspheme
Such goodness, on this side of Heaven unknown,
And be a base and perjured wretch!

ANGELO.

The Church,
On meet occasion—and what cause more noble
Than possible redemption of a soul
Like hers, sold captive to the heretic crew?—
Hath power to absolve the guilt of falsest oaths.

MARK.

Dost say so?

ANGELO.

Oh! that soft luxurious neck
Bare on the cold dark block to lie, the axe
Come gleaming down with horrid expedition—

MARK.

I'll do 't—

ANGELO.

Thou! soft and timorous boy!

MARK.

I'll do 't

If fiends stand plucking at my soul, and Hell
Yawn at my feet! Thou, Father, thou wilt ease
My soul in adamantine resolution.
I'll save her, if I die, on earth—for ever!
Do with me as thou wilt—I'll speak, I'll swear,
I'll pull down good men's imprecations, Heaven's—
No, Heaven will pardon if I save the heavenly!
Upon my head rain curses, contumelies,
She will erewhile be taught to bless me; ways
Will sure be found to teach her why I've dared
Thus 'gainst my nature, bold and false—she'll know it,
She'll know it all—my pains, my hopes, my truth!—

ANNE BOLEYN *landing at the Tower.*

SIR WILLIAM KINGSTON, GUARDS.

QUEEN.

Here—here, then all is o'er!—Oh! awful walls,
Oh! sullen towers, relentless gates, that open
Like those of Hell, but to receive the doom'd,
The desperate—Oh! ye black and massy barriers,
But broken by yon barr'd and narrow loopholes,
How do ye coop from this, God's sunshine world
Of freedom and delight, your world of woe,
Your midnight world, where all that live, live on
In hourly agony of death! Vast dungeon,

Populous as vast, of your devoted tenants!
Long ere our bark had touch'd the fatal strand,
I felt your ominous shadows darken o'er me,
And close me round; your thick and clammy air,
As though 'twere loaded with dire imprecations,
Wailings of dying and of tortured men,
Tainted afar the wholesome atmosphere.

KINGSTON (*to the Guard*).

Advance your halberds.

QUEEN.

Oh! Sir, pause—one look,
One last long look, to satiate all my senses.
Oh! thou blue cloudless canopy, just tinged
With the faint amber of the setting sun,
Where one by one steal forth the modest stars
To diadem the sky:—thou noble river,
Whose quiet ebb, not like my fortune, sinks
With gentle downfal, and around the keels
Of those thy myriad barks mak'st passing music:—
Oh! thou great silent city, with thy spires
And palaces, where I was once the greatest,
The happiest—I, whose presence made a tumult
In all your wondering streets and jocund marts:—
But most of all, thou cool and twilight air,
That art a rapture to the breath! The slave,
The beggar, the most base down-trodden outcast,
The plague-struck livid wretch, there's none so vile,
So abject, in your streets, that swarm with life—

They may inhale the liquid joy Heaven breathes—
They may behold the rosy evening sky—
They may go rest their free limbs where they will:
But I—but I, to whom this summer world
Was all bright sunshine; I, whose time was noted
But by succession of delights——Oh! Kingston,
Thou dost remember, thou wert then Lieutenant,
'Tis now—how many years?—my memory wanders—
Since I set forth from yon dark low-brow'd porch,
A bride—a monarch's bride—King Henry's bride!
Oh! the glad pomp, that burn'd upon the waters—
Oh! the rich streams of music that kept time
With oars as musical—the people's shouts,
That call'd Heaven's blessings on my head, in sounds
That might have drown'd the thunders—I've more need
Of blessing now, and not a voice would say it.

KINGSTON.

Your Grace, no doubt, will long survive this trial.

QUEEN.

Sir, Sir, it is too late to flatter me:
Time was I trusted each fond possibility,
For Hope sat queen of all my golden fortunes;
But now———

KINGSTON.

Day wears, and our imperious mandate
Brooks no delay—advance.

QUEEN.

Back, back, I say!—

I will not enter! Whither will ye plunge me?
Into what chamber where the sickly air
Smells not of blood—the black and cobwebb'd walls
Are all o'ertraced by dying hands, who've noted
In the damp dews indelible their tale
Of torture—not a bed nor straw-laid pallet
But bears th' impression of a wretch call'd forth
To execution. Will ye place me there,
Where those poor babes, their crook-back'd uncle murder'd,
Still haunt?—Inhuman hospitality!
Look there! look there! fear mantles o'er my soul
As with a prophet's robe, the ghostly walls
Are sentinel'd with mute and headless spectres,
Whose lank and grief-attenuated fingers
Point to their gory and dissever'd necks,
The least a lordly noble, some like princes.
Through the dim loopholes gleam the haggard faces
Of those, whose dark unutterable fate
Lies buried in your dungeons' depths; some wan
With famine, some with writhing features fix'd
In the agony of torture.—Back! I say:
They beckon me across the fatal threshold,
Which none may pass and live.

KINGSTON.

The deaths of traitors,
If such have died within these gloomy towers,
Should not appal your grace with such vain terrors;

The chamber is prepared where slept your Highness
When last within the Tower.

QUEEN.

Oh! 'tis too good
For such a wretch—a death-doom'd wretch as me.
My Lord, my Henry—he that call'd me forth
Even from that chamber, with a voice more gentle
Than flutes o'er calmest waters—will not wrong
Th' eternal Justice—the great law of Kings!
Let him arraign me—bribe as witnesses
The angels that behold our inmost thoughts,
He'll find no crime but loving him too fondly;
And let him visit that with his worst vengeance.
Come, Sir, your wearied patience well may fail:
On to that chamber, where I slept so sweetly,
When guiltier far than now. On—on, good Kingston.

Whitehall.

KING HENRY AND ATTENDANTS.

KING.

'Sdeath! ye're all traitors: the King's bed defiled,
And by his grooms, and ye must pause and parley
For proof and witness! Find me demonstration,
Or I'll be law, witness, and judge. A King
Not to cast off a wanton from his bed,
But must be trammel'd, thwarted, check'd, controll'd
By quirks of law, old formal statutes, rolls

Of parchment scribbled o'er with musty phrases!
I'll let you know our will 's this kingdom's law.
Where 's Norreys?

ATTENDANT.

He awaits your Highness' pleasure.

KING.

Come hither, Norreys: we have loved, have trusted you—
Could you find out no nobler way than this
Of being a traitor? could your daring lust
Stoop to no humbler paramour than our queen?

NORREYS.

Your pardon, Sire, but save your Highness' presence,
Show me the man dare taint my name with treason,
I'd dash my gauntlet in his face, and choke
Th' audacious lie within his venomous throat.
And more, excepting still my Liege's person,
Whoe'er hath slander'd the Queen's honour, be it
With me, or Knight far worthier of her favour,
I do defy that man to mortal battle,
Body to body, as a Knight—I'll prove him
The most convicted, recreant, foulest slanderer,
Whose breath e'er soil'd a Lady's spotless name!

KING.

Thou hast done us service, Norreys; for that reason,
Though we impeach our honour by our mercy,
Confess, if treacherous opportunity
Or her too easy virtue did allure thee,
(For in the heat and wild distemperature

Of passion, noblest souls forget themselves.)
Be bold, be dauntless, but be true: we pledge
The honour of a King, to give thee back
Thy forfeit life; for look ye, she shall die—
She and her minions!—Stand thou forth our witness,
Perchance, beside thy life, our grace may find
Some meet return.

NORREYS.

I do beseech your Highness,
What act of mine in all my life avouches
The slanderous hope, to buy or life, or what
I value more, my Sov'reign's gracious favour,
I 'd perjure mine own soul, accuse the blameless?
My Liege, you are abused—foully abused!
Some devil hath beset your easy ear.
If you strike off this unoffending head,
Your Majesty will lose a faithful servant—
That 's soon replaced; but for the Queen, I say,
And will maintain it with my life, the best,
The chastest Queen, the closest nun in Europe,
Is Messalina to a Vestal——

KING.

Off!
Away with him to the Tower.—What! have we stoop'd
Thus to be gracious, to be scorn'd and rated,
And by our slaves?

THE ABOVE, WINCHESTER.

KING.

Why how now, Winchester?
Another Churchman come t' impeach his King,
And with mock charitable incredulity
Arraign his justice? I 'd but now a missive
From Cranmer;—he, forsooth, good blameless man,
Knowing no sin himself, believes there 's none
In others.—'Sdeath! I 'll hear no more excuses;
The fact 's as clear, or shall be, as yon Sun.
Thou think'st her guiltless?

GARDINER.

Till this hour, my Liege,
I could have pledged my life, sworn strongest oaths
That such a monstrous sin—a sin that darkens
The annals of mankind, makes us suspect
Some moral plague broke out in human nature—
Had been impossible. Oh! best and greatest,
That best and greatest to ungrateful men
Should be a licence thus to wrong the bounties
By which they lived!—And that the Queen—raised up
From a Knight's daughter to the throne of England—
A partner of King Henry's bed—the strange,
Th' unnatural act doth give itself the lie!
It doth outargue closest demonstration,
And make us rather deem our senses traitors
Than trust the assurance of most damning proofs.

KING.

Ha! proofs!

GARDINER.

Would there were none, my Liege, who bears
Tidings of shame to an abused husband,
That husband too a King, a glorious King—
Sire, my ungracious presence still will seem
A base remembrancer of these foul deeds,
Odious as they——

KING.

Your proofs, good Prelate, proofs.

GARDINER.

Is the confession of the guilty, forced
By no stern tension of the searching rack,
Nor laceration of the bleeding flesh,
But free, unbribed, unsought——

KING.

Ha! which?

GARDINER.

My Liege,
'Tis that outdoes all record of old crime,
Makes true all tales of fabulous wantonness;
It is the boy—the beardless boy!—Oh! lust,
Blind as unbridled, frantic as impure,
That no discrimination knows, nor choice
Of base from noble, foul from fair—to fall
From the allow'd embrace of such a King——

KING.

Now, by St. Paul! thou wear'st our patience.—Speak,
How got ye this? look ye confirm it.

GARDINER.

Sire,
May 't please your Highness, that a holy Friar,
Albeit I know your Grace for weightiest reasons
Mistrusts their order, hath perpetual access
Unto the prisoner Smeaton.

KING.

Ha! a priest
I' the plot—why then 'tis ripe and pregnant. Gardiner,
We are bound to thee. My Lord of Winchester,
Look thou make good this charge against our Queen,
Or, by St. Paul! thou shalt have cause to rue it.
So, back to Greenwich; we 'll go hunt the deer!
Blow horns—yell dogs—we 'll have a gorgeous day!
The sun is in the Heavens, and our high heart
Is mounting with him. Off—to horse—to horse.

The Tower.

QUEEN.

"Blessed are those that weep."—Oh! truth of truths,
Not understood till felt—thou grace of Heaven,
Spirit of Christ, thou didst not all forsake me,
When my whole life was like a banquet—served
By Pride and Luxury—dangerous cup-bearers.

Prayers, all unwonted on the dainty couch,
Where Queens are lapp'd in purple, fail'd not me.
Mine heart, a place forbid to pain or sorrow,
Thou didst incline to other's grief: I read
In the deep lines of woe-worn cheeks the bliss
Of resignation to the Eternal will;
And felt, admired, adored the Christian beauty
Of graces that I had no scope to practise.
But now, oh Christ! that thou vouchsafest me
The mercy of affliction—oh! the warmth
Of prayer that burns upon my lips, the deep,
The full religion that o'erflows my heart.
My cited thoughts stand ready at my call,
And undistracted memory ranges o'er
My map of life—where it is wilderness
Or weed-o'ergrown, pours streams of penitence;
But where the sunshine of Heaven's grace, though cross'd
By hasty clouds of earthly passion, gleams
Upon the golden harvest of good deeds,
It glorifies that Sun in humblest thankfulness.
Thee, therefore, amiable prison, thee—
Oh! Solitude—dreadful in apprehension;
When present, to the friendless, the best friend!
Henceforth will I esteem, as much beyond
The pride and press of courts, as I feel nearer
To Heaven within you.

QUEEN, CRANMER.

QUEEN.

Good my Lord Archbishop,
I will not wrong thee by the idle question
Why here? 'Tis sorrow's dwelling, and thou art here
But in obedience to thy heart and function.

CRANMER.

I come not, Lady, to erect anew
The much misused Confessional, where Sins
Best hid in shameful silence, or wrung forth
In voiceless anguish, to Heaven's midnight ear,
Are acted o'er again in foul recital:—
But oh, if thou art fallen, the saintliest pupil
In our young school of Christian graces, thou
That to the living fountain of the Gospel
Cam'st duly, to draw forth the eternal waters,
What infamy will blacken o'er our cause.
A horror of deep darkness hath oppress'd
The Church, that waits in awful hope th' event.

QUEEN.

Cranmer, behold this book, my sole companion,
Yet whose sweet converse makes my prison day
So short I'm fain t' encroach upon the night.
Sir, were I guilty (and in truth I know
My crime but vaguely), there 's a passage here
Of one detected in such nameless sin,
That had been blotted with my scalding tears:

'Tis stainless, and in truth unread. Nor ask I,
If my accusers are less deep in sin;
If I am guilty, let who will cast first
The avenging stone, and heap the death upon me.

CRANMER.

Heaven's grace be praised! but oh! the obdurate King.

QUEEN.

There 's death in thy sad looks: speak, I'll endure it.
He that has placed this cross upon my shoulders
Will give me strength to bear it. I defy not,
With boastfulness unfeminine, the shame,
The agony; nor yet ungrateful speak
As weary of a world only too full
Of joyance. Thou, my child, would'st well rebuke
Thy mother's selfish soul if she could leave thee
Without a rending of her heart-strings: thou
Not less, my mother! most of all, my husband!
If unreluctant I could load thy soul
With the foul crime of my judicial murder;
Even our afflicted Church may ill sustain
The loss of my unworthy aid.

CRANMER.

Oh! rate not
Thus low your faithful service: farewell now
Vain hope, that the whole land should hear the Word
Of God go forth on all the winds; no more
Fatigue the deaf cold Saint with fruitless pray'r,
Or kiss with pilgrim lips the unheeding shrine:

That not a village, not a silent hamlet
In mountain solitude, or glen, of traveller
Untrod, should want its sabbath bell to knoll
To purest worship: that a holy priesthood,
Chaste, simple, to themselves alone severe,
Poor below luxury, rich beyond contempt,
Environ'd with their heaven-led families,
Should with their lives' most saintly eloquence
Preach Christ—Christ only:—while all reverend Learning
In arch'd cathedral cloister, or the grove
That bosoms deep the calm and thoughtful college,
Should heavenward meditate, and bring to earth
The knowledge learnt amid the golden stars.
But now shall irreligious Avarice
Pluck from his lips the Scholar's dole—the Temples
Lie desecrate in ruin—or the night
Of ancient ignorance and error sink
On the dark land for ever and for ever.

QUEEN.

Alas! Sir, why enamour me with life,
Making me deem myself of value here,
Here in this world, which I must leave?—So young
To be cut off, and so untimely! cast
A blooming branch to the cold grave! Yet Heaven,
Whose cause it is, will raise defenders up.
My child! my daughter! oh prophetic soul!
I dare not trust, yet will not disbelieve

Thy glorious omens. Good my Lord Archbishop,
Thou'lt not endure these knees should grow to earth,
To less than Heaven; but I adjure thee, watch
Her ripening spirit, sow the seed, ne'er lost
Though cast on the waste waters.

CRANMER.

Heaven but grant
The life and power!

QUEEN.

T' another subject now,
My sins, my sins!

CRANMER.

Of them to Christ alone;—
That heart bleeds freeliest that inly bleeds.

QUEEN.

Bear with me yet, my Lord, for I must tax
Your kindness further. There is one, but one
In all this world, my memory names, hath cause
To think of me as of her enemy,
The Lady Mary; for a dying woman
Entreat her pardon. I've a letter here,
Writt'n to the King with such poor eloquence
As I am mistress of: beseech thee hear it;
Then, if thou wilt, be thou the bearer of it.

The Letter.

"Sire, your displeasure and imprisonment
Are all so strange to me, that what to write
I know not, what t' excuse: you sent erewhile
Mine enemy to urge me to confess,
And so secure your favour;—willingly,
If to confess a truth might purchase me
My ne'er-despised safety—but imagine not
Your wife will own a sin ne'er soil'd her thoughts.
Never had Prince a wife so loyal – duteous—
So to affection true, as your Anne Boleyn.
That name and place had been my life's content,
God and your Grace so willing it; yet ne'er
Forgot I, that the fancy which had raised me
Might wander to another fairer object.
You chose me, nor deserving, nor desiring,
Your Queen and Partner:—having so honour'd me,
Good, your Grace, let no light unworthy motive,
Nor my malicious enemies' false counsel,
Withdraw your favour from me; least the stain,
Th' indelible stain of a disloyal heart,
Attaint your duteous wife and royal daughter.
Try me, good King, but with a lawful trial,
Not with my foes my judges—try me openly;

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* This is little more than a versification of the celebrated letter; the authenticity of which Mr. Ellis appears to have established.

So shall my innocence shine forth as day,
Your nice and jealous honour be absolved,
Th' opprobrious voice of the world's slander silenced:—
Or by the undoubted plainness of my guilt,
Your Grace escape all censure of rash harshness,
And God and man approve th' extremest rigour
Of vengeance on a lawless wife:—so freely
Your Grace may follow that your heart's affection,
Fix'd where I know, but where I may not name.
But if my death, worse than my death, my shame,
In your high councils is already doom'd,
I make my prayer to God to pardon you,
To blot this most unprincely usage of me
From your account, when thou and I shall meet
Before his judgment throne, where I shall stand,
Judge howsoe'er the world, in saintly whiteness.
I've but one more request; on me alone,
If it must fall, fall all thy wrath—Oh! touch not
The innocent lives of those poor gentlemen
In prison for my sake. If e'er thy wife
Found favour in thy sight—if e'er thine ear
Found music in Anne Boleyn's name—deny not
This last, this dying prayer. No more I trouble thee.
The Holy Trinity keep your good Grace
In health, life, happiness, and holiness.
Written from my doleful prison in the Tower,
Your loyal and most faithful wife, Anne Boleyn."

CRANMER.

God, that can make the marble heart like wax,
Make this his instrument of grace!

QUEEN.

Amen.

A Prison in the Tower.

ANGELO, MARK SMEATON.

ANGELO.

Down, impotent remorse! temptation, down!
My soul abjures thee! and thou, carnal pride,
That wilt not use the means this world calls base
For that great end, t' advance the faith of Christ!
What if the span of some few mortal lives
Be somewhat shrunk, some eyes untimely closed
On this world's sun, will not ten thousand souls
Live through eternity's unfathom'd years,
And a whole nation walk in moral light?
'Tis but the wise relentlessness of Heaven.
Doth the dread earthquake feel remorse, that makes
A populous city one vast tomb, where Guilt
And Innocence lie side by side? Does Pity
Pale the blue cheek of pestilence, that blasts
Whole nations? Doth the sweeping deluge pause,
And hold suspended its vast weight of waters,
To give the righteous time to fly the ruin?
The best, the wisest, holiest Saints and Pontiffs

Have sent fierce war with undiscerning vengeance
To waste the heretic's land; for though just Heav'n
Turn from the field of carnage—from the city
Made desolate—far rather it beholds them,
Than the fierce tossings of the infernal pit,
And Hell made rich with everlasting souls.—
Here are but two: one guiltless, and one guilty.
On—and be fearless—on, my soul!
He sleeps;
Poor wretch, thou'lt sleep ere long more deep—he dreams.

MARK (*in his sleep*).

Her voice—her voice—ye heard her lute-like voice,
Who loosed these bonds, who led me forth from death?
'Twas I, your servant, I——
Where am I?—who
And what art thou?—The Father Angelo!
Oh! sleep, sweet sleep, art thou a prophetess,
Or but a gracious and most kind deceiver?
Oh! palace-builder—oh! thou Queen of bridals,
That in the silent prison mak'st the bells
Sound for the jocund marriage—oh! magician,
With realm of witchcraft wide as thought—time, place,
And circumstance, combine, and shift, and change,
Like spirits on thy sorcerous wand that wait,
And all things are that are not—night is day,
Grief joy, death life, th' impossible becomes
Breathing reality; thou dost take up
Th' unpillow'd beggar, and dost proudly seat him

Upon a throne—dost bring the Queen of queens
Down to the level of a boy like me.

ANGELO.

Mark Smeaton, I am here to know thy purpose,
Thy calm deliberate purpose: yet 'tis time
To disavow thy dangerous evidence—
Yet, but not long: I saw the Judges pass
Across the court, and one that bare an axe
Went first, as to denote they sate in judgment
Upon a capital crime.

MARK.

Then she must die—
If by mine oath she is found guilty, who
Shall intercept that bloody instrument?

ANGELO.

There has been stir and parleying to and fro
Concerning a pre-contract, said to exist
Between the Queen, when young, and the Lord Piercy;
And wherefore this, but the relenting King
Would be content to break the chain asunder
That galls him.

MARK.

Yet to swear—before high Heaven—
All-seeing Heaven!—Heaven, that in thunder spake
The stern command, "Thou shalt not bear false witness!"

ANGELO.

'Tis well:—what is't to thee if the fierce King
Add to his ruthless soul the crime of murder;

And one unhousel'd heretic more bear down,
Her soul all leprous with its gangrene taint,
To burn for endless ages? I had brought
The deposition, that but wants thy signet
And oath before some witnesses that wait
I' the court without—but to the flames with it,
And to the block with her—not worth the jeoparding
The immortal spirit——

MARK.

Not worth!—if 'twere but death,
To go to sleep in the cold grave, and know
That she walk'd harmless in the living world.
Oh! Sir, but Hell has some thrice darkest chamber,
Some outcast dwelling, where the perjured hear
The hissing and the execration of the damn'd.

ANGELO.

Crime is not crime but in its motive:—thou
Art false but to be true—false to her fame,
True to her better interests.—But I came not
To argue. Yet when thou go'st hence, take heed
Thou pass not o'er the hill where Traitors die;
Lest trammel'd in the press, thou'rt forced to see,
From first to last, the hideous deed—the stroke,
The agony, the despair, the writhing hands,
The sever'd neck, the cry to Heaven, that Heaven
Shall turn away from, and——

MARK.

Give me the paper;

Let me not read it, lest its hideous falsehood
Shake my faint resolution. There—'tis done!

ANGELO.

What, ho! within,—ye see this youth deliver
This instrument as his own deed.

WITNESSES.

We do.

ANGELO.

Now in and sleep again.

MARK.

Sleep!—never more;
The perjured do not sleep; the slanderers, those
That bear false witness—yet Heaven knows, and Heaven
Will pardon—and she too, like Heaven, will know,
Like Heaven will pardon! Sir, I cannot think
Thou hast deceived me; if thou hast, the tortures
Of all eternity will be too short
T' avenge this wicked subornation!

ANGELO.

Peace!

MARK.

Oh! pardon, Sir, my thoughts do swim so strangely;
Things all so monstrous and incredible
Have come to pass, there's nought that seems too strange,
And nothing is but what could never be.
That thou, a man of such strict saintliness,
Should'st be so false, finds credit with me only
Because it is impossible, and far
Beyond the reach and scope of our belief.

A Hall in the Tower.

DUKE OF NORFOLK, DUKE OF SUFFOLK, MARQUIS EXETER, AND OTHERS AS JUDGES. THE QUEEN AND OFFICERS.

NORFOLK.

Read our commission.

OFFICER.

Thomas, Duke of Norfolk,
The Duke of Suffolk, Marquis Exeter,
Earl Arundel, and certain other peers
Here present; ye are met in the Tower of London,
By special mandate from the King, t' arraign
Of certain dangerous and capital treasons
Against the peace and person of the King
Anne, Queen of England.

CRIER.

Come into the Court,
Anne, Queen of England.

QUEEN.

Here.

OFFICER.

Anne, Queen of England,
(Be seated, it beseems your Grace's station,)
Look on this Court, these peers of England, met,
By the King's high commission, to pass sentence
Between thyself and the King's Grace—hast aught
T' object ere thou'rt arraign'd?

QUEEN.

I'd thought, my Lords,
It had stood more with the King's justice, more
With the usage of the land, a poor weak woman
Had not been forced t' abide your awful ordeal
Alone and unadvised; that Counsel, learned
In forms of law, and versed by subtle practice
In forcing from the bribed or partial witnesses
Th' unwilling truth, had been assigned me.—Well,
Be 't as it is—I have an advocate
Gold cannot fee, nor circumstance appal;
An advocate, whose voiceless eloquence,
If it should fail before your earthly court,
Shall in a higher gain me that acquittal
Mine enemies' malice may deny me here—
Mine Innocence. Proceed.

OFFICER.

Anne, Queen of England,
Thou stand'st arraign'd, that treasonously and foully,
To the dishonour of his Highness' person
And slander of his issue, thou hast conspired
With certain Traitors, now convict and sentenced—
George, Viscount Rochford, Henry Norreys, Knight,
Sir William Brereton, Francis Weston, Knights,
And one Mark Smeaton,——

QUEEN.

Pause, Sir; heard I rightly

My Brother's name, Lord Rochford's? I beseech you,
My Lords, what part bears he in this indictment?

OFFICER.

The same with all the rest.

QUEEN.

Great God of Thunder,
Refrain thy bolt!—my Lords, there are among ye
Have noble Sisters, if ye deem this possible,
I do consent ye deem it true. Go on, Sir.

OFFICER.

And one Mark Smeaton.

QUEEN.

Would they make me smile
With iteration of that name—a meet
And likely lover for King Henry's Queen!

NORFOLK.

Read, now, the Depositions. Each and all,
My Lords, ye have perused that dangerous paper
Written by the Lady Wingfield, now deceased—
Heard sundry evidence of words unseemly
And most unroyal spoken by her Grace.

QUEEN.

The Depositions! good, my lord—I'd thought
T' have seen my accusers face to face: is this
The far renown'd and ancient English Justice?

OFFICER.

The Deposition of Lord Viscount Rochford:—
That for th' impossible and hideous charge,

His soul abhors it with such sickly loathing,
Words cannot utter it: to stab the babe
I' the mother's arms, to beat the brains from out
A father's hoary head, had been to nature
Less odious, less accurst.

QUEEN.

There spake my brother.

OFFICER.

The Deposition of Sir Henry Norreys:—
That the Queen's Grace is as the new-born babe
For him—for others, he will prove her so
In mortal combat 'gainst all England.

Sir Francis Weston—doth deny all guilt,
With an asseveration, if in thought
Or word he hath demean'd her Grace's honour,
He imprecates Heaven's instant thunderbolt.
Sir William Brereton—if all women here
In England were as blameless as her Grace,
The Angels would mistake this land for Heaven.

Mark Smeaton doth confess——

QUEEN.

Confess!

OFFICER.

That twice
In guilty commerce with the Queen——

QUEEN.

My Lords,
Who is it hath suborn'd this wretched boy?
I do arraign that man, in the dread court
Whose sentence is eternity! My soul
Shall rise in judgment, when the Heavens are fire
Around Christ's burning throne, against that man;
And say, "on earth he murder'd my poor body,
And that false swearing boy's lost soul in Hell."

OFFICER.

This full confession—sign'd, and in the sight
Of witnesses delivered, in due form
Of law, in every part clear and authentic.

NORFOLK.

Anne, Queen of England, ere this high commission
Pass to their final sentence, hast thou aught
To urge upon their Lordships in defence
Or palliation of these fearful charges?

QUEEN.

My Lords! th' unwonted rigour of the King
And mine imprisonment have something shaken
My constant state of mind: I do beseech you,
If I speak not so reverently or wisely
Of the King's justice as I ought, bear with me.
I will not say, that some of you, my Lords,
For my religion and less weighty motives,
Are my sworn enemies—'twere to disparage
The unattainted whiteness of my cause,

That had defied the malice of the basest,
Nor deigns mistrust the high-soul'd enmity
Of English nobles. When that I have forced you
To be the vouchers for my honesty,
My fame's pure gold shall only blaze the brighter,
Tried in the furnace of your deadly hate!
My Lords, the King, whose bounties, numberless
And priceless, neither time nor harsher usage
Shall ever raze from my heart's faithful tablets—
The King, I say, took me an humble maid,
With not a jewel but my maiden fame:
That I 'm his wife, seeing the infinite distance
Between my Father's daughter and a throne,
Argues no base or lowly estimate.
Think ye a crown so galling to the brows,
And a Queen's name so valueless, that false
And recreant to the virtue which advanced me,
I should fall off thus basely?—I am a mother,
My Lords, and hoped that my right royal issue
Should rule this realm: had I been worse than worst,
Looser than loosest—think ye I'd have peril'd
The pride of giving birth to a line of Kings,
And robb'd my children of their sceptred heritage?
Your proofs, my Lords!—some idle words, that spoken
By less than me, had been forgotten air:
The force of words dwells not in their mere letters,
But in the air, time, place, and circumstance
In which they 're utter'd—the poor laughing child

Will call himself a King, will ye indict him
Of treason? If less solemnly I 've spoken,
Or gravely than beseem'd my queenly state,
'Twas partly that his Grace would take delight
In hearing my light laughing words glance off,
As is the wont in gay and courtly France:—
Partly, that raised from such a lowly state
Haply to fall again, I watch'd my spirit,
Lest with an upstart pride I might offend
The noble Knights whose service honour'd me.
If thus I've err'd, through humbleness familiar,
Heaven will forgive the fault, though man be merciless!
To the rest, my Lords! knowing nought living dared
Attaint my fame, my enemies have ransacked
The grave; the Lady Wingfield hath been summon'd
To speak against me from her tomb—and what?—
Vague rumours! that I will not say base envy
(I 'll have more charity to the dead than they
To me), but pardonable error, zeal
For the King's honour, may have swollen to charges,
Which if ye trust, not the shrined Vestal 's pure.
My Lords, my Lords, ye better know than I
What subtle arts, what gilded promises
Have been employed to make the noble Knights
My fellow criminals, my accusers! which
Might not have purchased life by this base service,
And crept into a late and natural grave?
But let me ask, my Lords, who, base enough,

And so disloyal, as t' abuse thus grossly
The bounties of so good a King, had risen
To this wild prodigality of honour,
For a loose woman to lay down his head
And taint his name, his blood, with infamy?
For this besotted boy!—my Lords, I know not
If to rebut this charge with serious speech.
Such as it is, my Lords, this modest beauty
Made me a Queen, and other Kings disdain'd not
To lay their flattering incense at its shrine.
My Lords, there 's none amongst your noblest sons,
Rich in ancestral titles, none so moulded
By nature's cunning symmetry, so high
In station, but my favour had endangered
His truth t' his King:—and I, I that disdain'd
Less than a crown, with wayward wantonness
Demean me to a half-form'd, base born slave!—
I do demand—if that ye will not damn
Your names to everlasting infamy—
Here, in this court, this instant, ye bring forth
This boy: if with one word I force you not
To do me justice on this monstrous slander—
Do with me as ye will. I 've done, and now
Renew an old petition:—if the King,
Abused and cheated of his wonted mercies,
Hath sworn my death;—so order it, I pray you,
That on my head alone fall all his wrath:
Let these untainted gentlemen go free,

And mine all honour'd Brother. Spare the King
The anguish of unnecessary crime,
And with less blood defile your own fair names.

NORFOLK.

Anne, Queen of England, first this Court commands
You lay aside the state and ornaments
Of England's Queen.

QUEEN.

As cheerfully, my Lords,
As a young bride her crown of virgin flowers.

NORFOLK.

Prisoner, give ear! I, Thomas, Duke of Norfolk,
In name of all th' assembled Peers, declare
The verdict of this court:—all circumstance,
All proof, all depositions duly weigh'd,
We do pronounce thee guilty of High Treason.—
And, further, at the pleasure of the King,
Adjudge thy body to be burnt with fire,
Or thine head sever'd from thy guilty shoulders.

QUEEN.

Lord God of Hosts!—the way! the truth! the life!
Thou know'st me guiltless; yet, oh! visit not
On these misjudging men their wrongful sentence—
Shew them that mercy they deny to me.
My Lords, my Lords, your sentence I impeach not;
Ye have, no doubt, most wise and cogent reasons,
Best heard perhaps in th' open court, to shame
The wretched evidence adduced. My Lords,

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I ask no pardon of my God, for this
Of which ye've found me guilty—to the King
In person and in heart I've been most true.
Haply I've been unwise, irreverent,
And with unseemly jealousies arraign'd
His unexampled goodness. This I say not
To lengthen out my too protracted life,
For God hath given, will give me strength to die.
I'm not so proudly honest, but the grief
Of my suspected chastity is gall
And wormwood to me; were't not my sole treasure,
It less had pain'd me thus to see it blacken'd.
My Lords, I take my leave:—upon your heads,
Upon your families, on all this kingdom,
On him who is its head and chiefest grace,
The palm of Europe's sovereignty, may Heaven
Rain blessings to the end of time—that most,
And most abundant, his redeeming grace!

A Prison.

MAGDALENE, MARK SMEATON.

MAGDALENE.

Oh! Mark, Mark, Mark, to find thee here, and thus!
Brother, that I should come to shame through thee!
Through thee, my heart's one pride! I pray'd my way
Through mocking men to find thee. Some did spurn me,

Did almost void their rheum on me; and some
Pitied me with more barbarous charity
That I'm thy Sister; thou whom I had chosen
Before the proudest Knight of all the Court.
And thou must die—all croak'd that in mine ear,
The Ravens! All in drear accord.—

MARK.

Die! die!

Oh! yes—the solemn forms must be gone through,
And the stern sentence read and register'd.
And then!—oh then! what pride of rank, what distance
Shall keep two branded criminals asunder?
Oh! pardon me, that thus my selfish soul
Rejoice in thy debasement: thou wilt know
What I have risk'd, have suffer'd, all for thee.
Oh! what's the world—its infamy—its pride—
To those that love? they are their own world.

MAGDALENE.

Mark!

Dear Mark, this dreadful prison, and the awe
Of death—the guilt—oh! would I dared deny it;
The guilt hath made thee frantic: not a word
Hath meaning to mine ears—thou look'st on me,
Not as a man condemn'd to die, with eyes
All gleaming with a horrid joy.

MARK.

Thou, too,

Thou only, Magdalene, shalt find free entrance
To the retired garden of our joy.

THE ABOVE, ANGELO.

MARK.

Oh! Father Angelo! is she set free?
Where is she gone? may I yet follow her,
And tell her with what violence to my soul
I've forced and bow'd myself to crime to save her?

ANGELO.

She will be free anon; thou first.

MARK.

Dost say so?
Now will I wait, and linger all unseen;
And when the massy doors roll back, and slow
The huge portcullis groans along its grooves,
And down the drawbridge falls—I shall behold her,
Along the frowning files of gloomy archers,
Come gliding like a swan on turbid waters.

ANGELO.

Deceive thyself no more—I spake of freedom,
For death it is that frees th' encumber'd spirit
From the dark prison of this world; nor she
Nor thou shall ever pass these iron gates,
But to th' appointed stroke of death.

MAGDALENE.

Look, look!
He cannot speak! he chokes, he shivers!—look,
He's dying. Oh! already you have kill'd him;
My Brother, wake!

ANGELO.

Oh! youth, whom Heaven hath chosen,
For its blind instrument, to work the ruin
Of its most deadly enemy, I'm come
To fit thee for thy sacrifice—arise
A Martyr to the glorious cause. I open
The gates of Heaven before thy mounting soul.

MARK.

Devil! no man of God! unmeasured liar!
My soul is sick at thee. Thou hold the keys
Of Heaven, thou bloody wretch forsworn? thou worse,
If worse can be than mine own perjured self!
I spurn thee, curse thee, execrate thy faith
And thee!

ANGELO.

Die, then! die lost, accurst for ever!
Go with thy leprous soul unwash'd to Hell,
To see what hideous torments wait on perjury.

MARK.

Avaunt!

ANGELO.

Weak boy and thankless, whom I've wrought
To be a sharer in this great design;
Were thine head crown'd, thy body rough with scars
Won in the service of the Church, the joy
And pride of nations waiting on thy footsteps,
I'd trample on thy corpse with merciless heel,
If o'er it lay my way to lift the throne
Of Peter o'er the carnal Lords of earth.

MAGDALENE.

Oh! save him—save him! I have heard thee speak
In language that might melt the stoniest hearts;
I've heard thee pray with such soul-kindling warmth
Beside the bed of our departed Mother,
That iron bonds had burst like flax before thee.

ANGELO.

It stands not in my power; but, oh! rash youth,
Go not a rebel to the Church, to meet
The Church's Lord:—kneel, I entreat thee, kneel;
Let me not say I've slain thy soul; confess,
Repent, and be absolved.

MARK.

Avaunt! away!—
Wash thine own soul from thine own sins: kneel thou,
Howl for thy crimes, thy treasons, and thy murders!
And, if Christ give me power to pardon thee,
'Twill more avail thee in thy hour of need
Than all thy formal conjuring absolutions.
With her—with her—the gracious, good, and chaste,
I'll take my everlasting portion; trust
Even where she trusts; go where she goes——Oh! no,
My perjuries! my murders! when my soul
Would rise to track the starlight path of hers,
They'll hiss me, howl me down, down, down to blackness,
To horror, now the element of my soul.

ANGELO.

The bell! It sounds for thee, it summons thee!

I hear the trampling feet down the long galleries;
The grating bolts fall back: kneel, kneel—the Church
Will pardon thy wild words—be reconciled.

MARK.

Off!—I will have no share or portion with you.
Think you your crimes and murders, ye, no Priests
Of the great God of Truth and Holiness,
Will not out-preach you from the face of earth:
This air at length shall purify itself
From your curst doctrines.

ANGELO.

Saints and Holy Angels,
Hear not his blasphemies! but thee, my daughter,
Will I bestow among some holy Sisters.

MAGDALENE.

With thee, my Brother's Murderer? thee, whose guile
Has tainted his immortal soul with sin?
Sir, I'm a weak and foolish maid; I know not
The nice distinction of your rival creeds;
But this I know—'tis not the faith of Christ,
Of Christ the merciful, the sinless Christ,
To guide an innocent youth to such a sin,
And make a murderer of a heart had paused
To take the meanest insect's life. Oh! Brother,
Dear Brother, I will die with thee: they'll leave
A corner in thy narrow bed where I
May creep and hide my weary head.

ANGELO.

Be wise.

MAGDALENE.

No—if I may not die, I'll starve—I'll beg—
I'll serve the basest and most loathsome office,
Ere owe my pittance to my Brother's murderer.

ANGELO.

They're here—they are at the door.

MAGDALENE.

Ah!—

MARK.

Peace, my Sister!
Look you, I'm calm. I've hope—but not of life.
I'll tell thee—hark! I will go forth—I'll stand
Before the public eye—and then and there
I will undo the deadly crime I've done;
Unswear what I have sworn, with such strange oaths
That they perforce shall cancel their rash doom,
And she shall live, and not quite curse my memory.
Though their drums roll, and trumpets blare, I'll shriek
The audible truth—and then I'll lay me down
And take my quiet death—my quivering tongue
Still murmuring of her slander'd innocence.
And God shall give me grace not to denounce thee;
Thou shalt live on, and eat thy heart to see
Thy frustrate malice. Live, and still behold
Man after man, and kingdom after kingdom,
Fall from the faith that perjures—murders! Hark!
They're here—oh, Magdalene!—Farewell.

MAGDALENE.

Not yet,
I'll not part yet; there's none to pray for thee
But I; there's none to wind thy corpse—to weep,
To die upon it.

MARK.

Call on Christ, my Sister,
On Christ alone; cry loudly, fervently.
They're here—come, come.

MAGDALENE.

Go on, I'll follow thee,
Even to the brink, into the grave: go on;
Till I am pluck'd perforce from thee, I'll follow.

ANGELO (*alone*).

Oh! thou that thrice denied'st the Lord of Life,
Yet wert the Rock on which th' Eternal Church
Was built, thou know'st, oh Peter! that in zeal
For thy soul-saving throne, against my nature,
I've cast away this life. Oh! if thy servant
Have aught deserved by this self-sacrifice,
Thou with thy powerful intercession stand
Between his soul and endless burnings. Grant
The Masses I will pay, while life is mine,
May slake full soon the Purgatorial fires,
And gales of Paradise come breathing o'er
His rescued spirit!

So on to death, poor youth,

Not unabandon'd, nor unwept by him
Whose aid thou scornest now; but thou shalt own
There, where all motives and all hearts are known.

A Chamber in the Tower.

QUEEN.

Oh! Heaven! will they keep up this heavy din
For ever, mocking me with hope, that now
For me they're knolling—roll on roll and clash
On clash!—Oh! music most unmusical!
That never soundest but when graves are open,
And widows' hearts are breaking, and pale orphans
Wringing their hands above a silent bier.—
Four knells have rung, four now are dust—thou only
Remain'st, my Brother! thou art kneeling now,
Bare thy majestic neck——A pause—more long
Than wonted; hath the mercy of the King—
The justice rather?—shalt thou rush again
To our poor Mother's arms, and tell her yet
She 's not all childless?——Still no sound!—alas!
It may be that the rapture of deep pity,
And admiration of his noble bearing,
Suspend all hands at their blood-reeking work,
And cast a spell of silence o'er all sounds.—
Ha! thou low-rolling doubling drum—I hear thee!
Stern bell, that summon'st to no earthly temple!
Thou'rt now a worshipper in Heaven, my brother,

And thy poetic spirit ranges free
Worlds after worlds, confest th' immortal kindred
Of the blest angels—for thy heaven-caught fire,
Still like that fire sprang upward, and made pure
Th' infected air of this world as it pass'd.
My child—my mother—they 've forbidden me
To see once more on earth your dear lov'd faces;
There 's mercy in their harshness—here 's no place
To entertain the future Queen of England,
And God hath given me courage to keep down
The mother in my heart; thou too, my parent,
What hadst thou done but torn my heart asunder,
And all distracted my calm thoughts of Heaven.

Enter SIR WILLIAM KINGSTON.

QUEEN.

Now all is o'er with those brave gentlemen—
They died, I know, Sir, as they lived, right nobly.

KINGSTON.

They gave their souls to their Redeemer, Lady,
With protestations of your Highness' innocence,
'Twas their sole care and thought in death; they dared
Heaven's utmost vengeance if they falsely swore.

QUEEN.

And that false youth, clear'd he our honour?

KINGSTON.

Loud

He shrieked and struggled, not with fear of death,
But with the burden of some painful secret
He would unfold—the rapid executioner
Cut short his wailing.

QUEEN.

Most unrighteous speed!

KINGSTON.

Your Majesty's prepared?

QUEEN.

Oh! pomp of phrase,
To tell a sinner to prepare for judgment;
And yet, I think, Christ Jesus, through thy blood,
I'm but about to change an earthly crown
For one that 's amaranth.
There is no end
Of the unexhausted bounties of the King:
He made me first the Marchioness of Pembroke,
Duchess of Dorset, then his sceptred Queen;
And now a new advancement he prepares me,
One of Heaven's angels.—
Is it true, Sir William,
You've brought from Calais a most dextrous craftsman
In th' art of death?—here 's much ado, good truth,
To smite asunder such a neck as this,
My own slight hands grasp easily,
Ye weep
To see me smile—I smile to see you weep.
I have no tears: I have been reading o'er

His agony that suffer'd on the cross
For such poor sinners as myself, and there
Mine eyes spent all their moisture.

KINGSTON.

We rejoice
To see your Highness meet your doom thus calmly.

QUEEN.

I am to die—what 's that ?—why, thou and I
And all of us die every night; and duly
Morn to our spirits' resurrection comes
With rosy light, fresh flowers, and birds' sweet anthems;
But when our grave 's our bed, that instant comes
A morning, not of this world's treacherous light,
But fresh with palms, and musical with angels.
Oh ! but a cruel, shameful, public death—
There 's no disease will let the spirit loose
With less keen anguish than the sudden axe;
And for the shame—the sense of that 's within !
I've thoughts brook no communion or with that
Or fear. My death the Lord may make a way
T' advance his gracious purpose to this land:
There'll be, will see a delicate timid woman
Lay down her cheerful head upon the block
As on a silken pillow; when they know
'Twas Christ that even at that dread hour rebuk'd
Weak nature's fears, returning home, they'll kneel
And seek that power that turns our death to triumph.—
Sir, are you ready ?—they'll allow me time
To pray even there.—Go forward, Sir, we'll follow.

The Scaffold.

QUEEN.

My fellow subjects, I am here to die!
The law hath judged me—to the law I bow.
He that doth know all hearts, before whose throne,
Ere ye have reach'd your homes, I shall stand trembling—
God knows—I've lived as pure and chaste as snow
New fallen from Heaven; yet do not ye, my friends,
Presumptuous judge anew my dangerous cause,
Lest ye blaspheme against the wonted goodness
Of the King's Grace—most merciful and gentle
I've ever known him, and if e'er betray'd
From his kind nature, by most cogent reasons.
Adore the hidden secrets of his justice
As ye would Heaven's. Beseech you, my good friends,
If in my plenitude of power I've done
Not all the good I might, ye pardon me:—
If there be here to whom I've spoken harshly
Or proudly, humbly I entreat forgiveness.
—No, Sir, I'll wear no bandage o'er mine eyes,
For they can look on death, and will not shrink.
Beseech you, Sirs, with modesty unrobe me,
And let my women have the decent charge
Of my poor body.
Now, God bless the King,
And make his Gospel shine throughout the land!

FAZIO,

A TRAGEDY.

ORIGINAL ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following attempt at reviving our old national drama with greater simplicity of plot, was written with some view to the stage. Circumstances, and an opinion of considerable weight, induced me to prefer the less perilous ordeal of the press: as in the one case, if its merits are small or moderate, the quiet sleep of oblivion will be infinitely less grating to an author's feelings, than a noisy and tumultuous execution in a public Theatre; if, on the other hand, public opinion be in its favour, its subsequent appearance on the stage would be at least under favourable auspices. I am aware, that there is a prejudice at the Theatre against plays which have first appeared in print; but whence it originates I am at a loss to conceive. It being impossible, on the present scale of our Theatres, for more than a certain proportion of those present to see or hear with sufficient distinctness to form a judgment on a drama, which is independent of show and hurry; it surely would be an advantage that a previous familiarity with the language and incidents should enable the audience to catch those lighter and fainter touches of character, of passion, and of poetry, on which dramatic excellence so mainly depends. I put entirely out of the question those who go to a play from mere desire of novelty, whose opinions either way would be of very slight value.

The Play is founded on a story, which was quoted in the Annual Register for 1795, from the "Varieties of Literature;" but great liberties have been taken with it.

PREFATORY OBSERVATIONS.

This Play was written while I was at Oxford, and appeared soon after I had taken my first degree. It found its way upon the stage without my interference, and indeed without my consent being in any single instance solicited. It has retained its place there, partly, perhaps, from the interest of the story, and partly from the opportunity which it affords for the display of splendid female acting. Its first appearance, I believe, was at the Surrey Theatre, where it was brought forward under the name of "The Italian Wife," and it had been acted some time before I was aware that the piece of that name was my work. That Theatre was then, I believe, only licensed for operatic performances, but the company contrived to elude this restriction by performing all kinds of Dramas with what they called a musical accompaniment. Every now and then the string of a solitary violin was heard, while the actors went on in their parts without the slightest regard to the said accompaniment, and so represented any regular drama which might suit their purpose. It was in this manner that I first saw the performance of Fazio, but I remember that the actress who personated Bianca, was by no means deficient in power, and only wanted a better audience to improve her taste. Fazio was afterwards acted with complete success at Bath, and this, I believe, inclined the managers of Covent Garden to bring it forward on the London stage. This was done without even the common courtesy of giving me notice of

their intention. The first information which I received on the subject, was the request of Mr. C. Kemble, with whom I was then but slightly acquainted, through my intimate friend, his gifted sister, Mrs. Siddons, to permit him to read the part of Fazio to me. I must say that I think this was a monstrous power to be asserted by the manager of a theatre, to bring forward any play, because it had been published, on the stage. An author might entertain objections to public representation, he might judge better than the manager of the fitness or unfitness of his play for performance on the stage, yet he was at the mercy of the manager, and might be exposed to the pain and humiliation of having a play condemned, which he had neither wished nor consented to have produced on the stage. In the case of a poor or distressed author too, I must think that this would have been a most unjustifiable invasion upon his property; and that a theatre had no right, in honour or in equity, to derive emolument from a play, without any remuneration to the author. These matters, I hope, are now regulated with more regard to justice. For my own part, I had originally written the play for public representation, and could not but be pleased and flattered by its success. The effect produced by Miss O'Neill's admirable representation of Bianca proved, no doubt, to her, that she had been mistaken in her unfavourable opinion of the dramatic capabilities of the play, for it was to her private opinion that the original preface alluded. Since the marriage and retirement of Miss O'Neill, the part of Bianca was performed by Miss Kemble, with that rare genius with which she, for a short time, revived the stage. Her American journal, in more than one passage, relates the effect produced by her own personation of this part in different parts of the United States.

An imitation of this play has appeared on the French stage, but it was curious to me to trace its alteration in passing through a mind thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the modern French school, that of Victor Hugo and Dumas. I will only observe, that the interest was reversed, and all the sympathies were excited towards the person who was *not the wife*. Yet, I am told, that the admirable acting of Mademoiselle Mars carried through Clotilde with very great effect.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DUKE OF FLORENCE.

GONSALVO, AURIO, } *Senators of Florence.*

GIRALDI FAZIO.

BARTOLO.

PHILARIO.

FALSETTO.

DANDOLO.

THEODORE, ANTONIO, } *Captains of the Guard.*

PIERO.

MARCHESA ALDABELLA.

BIANCA.

CLARA.

FAZIO.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room with Crucibles and Apparatus of Alchymy.*

Enter FAZIO *and* BIANCA.

FAZIO.

WHY what a peevish envious fabulist
Was he, that vow'd cold wedlock's atmosphere
Wearies the thin and dainty plumes of love;
That a fond husband's holy appetite,
Like the gross surfeit of intemperate joy,
Grows sickly and fastidious at the sweets
Of its own chosen flower!—My own Bianca,
With what delicious scorn we laugh away
Such sorry satire!

BIANCA.

Which of thy smooth books
Teaches this harmony of bland deceit?
Oh, my own Fazio! if a serpent told me
That it was stingless in a tone like thine,

I should believe it. Oh, thou sweetly false!
That at cold midnight quitt'st my side to pore
O'er musty tomes, dark sign'd and character'd,
O'er boiling skellets, crucibles and stills,
Drugs and elixirs.

FAZIO.

Ay, chide on, my love;
The nightingale's complaining is more sweet,
Than half the dull unvarying birds that pipe
Perpetual amorous joy.—Tell me, Bianca,
How long is't since we wedded?

BIANCA.

Would'st thou know
Thy right and title to thy weariness?—
Beyond two years.

FAZIO.

Days, days, Bianca! Love
Hath in its calendar no tedious time,
So long as what cold lifeless souls call years.
Oh, with my books, my sage philosophy,
My infants, and their mother, time slides on
So smoothly, as 'twere fall'n asleep, forgetting
Its heaven-ordained motion. We are poor;
But in the wealth of love, in that, Bianca,
In that we are eastern sultans. I have thought,
If that my wondrous alchymy should win
That precious liquor, whose transmuting dew
Makes the black iron start forth brilliant gold,

Were it not wise to cast it back again
Into its native darkness?

BIANCA.

Out upon it!——
Oh, leave it there, my Fazio!—Leave it there!—
I hate it!—'Tis my rival, 'tis thy mistress.——
Ay, this it is that makes thee strange and restless,
A truant to thine own Bianca's arms,
This wondrous secret.

FAZIO.

Dost thou know, Bianca,
Our neighbour, old Bartolo?

BIANCA.

O yes, yes—
That yellow wretch, that looks as he were stain'd
With watching his own gold; every one knows him
Enough to loathe him. Not a friend hath he,
Nor kindred nor familiar; not a slave,
Not a lean serving wench: nothing e'er enter'd
But his spare self within his jealous doors,
Except a wand'ring rat; and that, they say,
Was famine-struck, and died there.——What of him?

FAZIO.

Yet he, Bianca, he, is of our rich ones.
There's not a galliot on the sea, but bears
A venture of Bartolo's; not an acre,
Nay, not a villa of our proudest princes,
But he hath cramp'd it with a mortgage; he,

He only stocks our prisons with his debtors.
I saw him creeping home last night; he shudder'd
As he unlock'd his door, and look'd around,
As if he thought that every breath of wind
Were some keen thief; and when he lock'd him in,
I heard the grating key turn twenty times,
To try if all were safe. I look'd again
From our high window by mere chance, and saw
The motion of his scanty moping lantern;
And, where his wind-rent lattice was ill stuff'd
With tatter'd remnants of a money-bag,
Through cobwebs and thick dust I spied his face,
Like some dry wither-boned anatomy,
Through a huge chest-lid, jealously and scantily
Uplifted, peering upon coin and jewels,
Ingots and wedges, and broad bars of gold,
Upon whose lustre the wan light shone muddily,
As though the New World had outrun the Spaniard,
And emptied all its mines in that coarse hovel.
His ferret eyes gloated as wanton o'er them,
As a gross Satyr on a sleeping Nymph;
And then, as he heard something like a sound,
He clapp'd the lid to, and blew out the lantern.
But I, Bianca, hurried to thy arms,
And thank'd my God that I had braver riches.

BIANCA.

Oh then, let that black furnace burst: dash down
Those ugly and misshapen jars and vials.

Nay, nay, most sage philosopher, to-night,
At least to-night, be only thy Bianca's.

[*She clings to him.*

FAZIO (*looking fondly at her*).

Why e'en the Prince of Bards was false and slanderous,
Who girt Jove's bride in that voluptuous zone,
Ere she could win her weary lord to love;
While my earth-born Bianca bears by nature
An ever-blooming cestus of delight!

BIANCA.

So courtly and so fanciful, my Fazio!
Which of our dukes hath lent thee his cast poesies?
Why, such a musical and learned phrase
Had soften'd the marchesa, Aldabella,
That high signora, who once pamper'd thee
Almost to madness with her rosy smiles;
And then my lady queen put on her winter,
And froze thee till thou wert a very icicle,
Had not the lowly and despised Bianca
Shone on it with the summer of her pity.

FAZIO.

Nay, taunt not her, Bianca, taunt not her!
Thy Fazio loved her once. Who, who would blame
Heaven's moon, because a maniac hath adored it,
And died in his dotage? E'en a saint might wear
Proud Aldabella's scorn, nor look less heavenly.
Oh, it dropt balm upon the wounds it gave,
The soul was pleased to be so sweetly wrong'd,

And misery grew rapturous. Aldabella!
The gracious! the melodious! Oh, the words
Laugh'd on her lips; the motion of her smiles
Shower'd beauty, as the air-caressed spray
The dews of morning; and her stately steps
Were light as though a winged angel trod
Over earth's flowers, and fear'd to brush away
Their delicate hues; ay, e'en her very robes
Were animate and breathing, as they felt
The presence of her loveliness, spread around
Their thin and gauzy clouds, ministering freely
Officious duty on the shrine where Nature
Hath lavish'd all her skill.

BIANCA.

A proud loose wanton!

FAZIO.

She wanton!—Aldabella loose!—Then, then
Are the pure lilies black as soot within,
The stainless virgin snow is hot and rancid,
And chastity——ay, it may be in heaven,
But all beneath the moon is wild and haggard.
If she be spotted, oh, unholiness
Hath never been so delicately lodged
Since that bad devil walk'd fair Paradise.

BIANCA.

Already silent? Hath your idol quaff'd
Enough of your soft incense? Fazio! Fazio!
But that her gaudy bark would aye disdain

The quiet stream whereon we glide so smooth,
I should be fearful of ye.

FAZIO.

Nay, unjust!
Ungenerous Bianca! who foregoes,
For the gay revel of a golden harp,
Its ecstasies and rich enchanting falls,
His own domestic lute's familiar pleasing?
But thou, thou vain and wanton in thy power,
Thou know'st canst make e'en jealousy look lovely,
And all thy punishment for that bad passion
Be this—[*kisses her*]—Good night!—I will but snatch a look
How the great crucible doth its slow work,
And be with thee; unless thou fanciest, sweet,
That Aldabella lurks behind the furnace;
And then, heaven knows how long I may be truant.

[*Exit* BIANCA.

FAZIO (*solus*).

Oh, what a star of the first magnitude
Were poor young Fazio, if his skill should work
The wondrous secret your deep-closeted sages
Grow grey in dreaming of! Why all our Florence
Would be too narrow for his branching glories;
It would o'erleap the Alps, and all the north
Troop here to see the great philosopher.
He would be wealthy too—wealthy in fame;

And that's more golden than the richest gold.

[*A groan without.*

Holy St. Francis! what a groan was there!

VOICE WITHOUT.

Within there!—Oh! within there, neighbour!—Death,
Murder, and merciless robbery!

FAZIO (*opening the door*).

What! Bartolo!

BARTOLO.

Thank ye, my friend! Ha! ha! ha! my old limbs!
I did not think them half so tough and sinewy.
St. Dominic! but their pins prick'd close and keen.
Six of 'em, strong and sturdy, with their daggers,
Tickling the old man to let loose his ducats.

FAZIO.

Who, neighbour, who?

BARTOLO.

Robbers, black crape-faced robbers,
Your only blood-suckers, that drain your veins,
And yet their meagre bodies aye grow sparer.
They knew that I had moneys from the Duke,
But I o'erreach'd them, neighbour: not a ducat,
Nay, not a doit, to cross themselves withal,
Got they from old Bartolo.——Oh, I bleed!
And my old heart beats minutes like a clock.

FAZIO.

A surgeon, friend!

BARTOLO.

Ay, one of your kind butchers,
Who cut and slash your flesh for their own pastime,
And then, God bless the mark! they must have money!
Gold, gold, or nothing! Silver is grown coarse,
And rings unhandsomely. Have I 'scaped robbing,
Only to give?——Oh there! there! there! Cold, cold,
Cold as December.

FAZIO.

Nay, then, a confessor!

BARTOLO.

A confessor! one of your black smooth talkers,
That drone the name of God incessantly,
Like the drear burthen of a doleful ballad!
That sing to one of bounteous codicils
To the Franciscans or some hospital!
Oh! there 's a shooting!—Oozing here!—Ah me!
My ducats and my ingots scarcely cold
From the hot Indies!—Oh! and I forgot
To seal those jewels from the Milan Duke!
Oh! misery, misery!—Just this very day,
And that mad spendthrift Angelo hath not sign'd
The mortgage on those meadows by the Arno.
Oh! misery, misery!—Yet I 'scaped them bravely,
And brought my ducats off!—— [*Dies.*

FAZIO.

Why e'en lie there, as foul a mass of earth
As ever loaded it. 'Twere sin to charity

To wring one drop of brine upon thy corpse.
In sooth, Death's not nice-stomach'd, to be cramm'd
With such unsavoury offal. What a God
'Mong men might this dead wither'd thing have been,
That now must rot beneath the earth, as once
He rotted on it! Why his wealth had won
In better hands an atmosphere around him,
Musical ever with the voice of blessing,
Nations around his tomb, like marble mourners,
Vied for their pedestals.—In better hands?
Methinks these fingers are nor coarse nor clumsy.
Philosophy! Philosophy! thou'rt lame
And tortoise-paced to my fleet desires!
I scent a shorter path to fame and riches.
The Hesperian trees nod their rich clusters at me,
Tickling my timorous and withdrawing grasp;—
I would, yet dare not:—that's a coward's reckoning.
Half of the sin lies in "I would." To-morrow,
If that it find me poor, will write me fool,
And myself be a mock unto myself.
Ay, and the body murder'd in my house!
Your carrion breeds most strange and loathsome insects—
Suspicion's of the quickest and the keenest—
So, neighbour, by your leave, your keys! In sooth,
Thou hadst no desperate love for holy church;
Long-knolled bell were no sweet music to thee.
A "God be with thee" shall be all thy mass;
Thou never loved'st those dry and droning priests.

Thou'lt rot most cool and quiet in my garden;
Your gay and gilded vault would be too costly.

[*Exit with the body of* BARTOLO.

SCENE II.—*A Street.*

Enter FAZIO, *with a dark Lantern.*

I, wont to rove like a tame household dog,
Caress'd by every hand, and fearing none,
Now prowl e'en like a grey and treasonous wolf.
'Tis a bad deed to rob, and I'll have none on't:
'Tis a bad deed to rob—and whom? the dead?
Ay, of their winding-sheets and coffin nails.
'Tis but a quit-rent for the land I sold him,
Almost two yards to house him and his worms:
Somewhat usurious in the main, but that
Is honest thrift to your keen usurer.
Had he a kinsman, nay a friend, 'twere devilish.
But now whom rob I? why the state—In sooth
Marvellous little owe I this same state,
That I should be so dainty of its welfare.
Methinks our Duke hath pomp enough, our Senate
Sit in their scarlet robes and ermine tippets,
And live in high and pillar'd palaces,
Where their Greek wines flow plentiful—Besides,
To scatter it abroad amid so many,
It were to cut the sun out into spangles,

And mar its brilliance by dispersing it.
Away! away! his burying is my Rubicon!
Cæsar or nothing! Now, ye close-lock'd treasures,
Put on your gaudiest hues, outshine yourselves!
With a deliverer's, not a tyrant's hand
Invade I thus your dull and peaceful slumbers,
And give you light and liberty. Ye shall not
Moulder and rust in pale and pitiful darkness,
But front the sun with light bright as his own.

SCENE III.—*The Street near Fazio's Door.*

Re-enter FAZIO *with a sack: he rests it.*

My steps were ever to this door, as though
They trod on beds of perfume and of down.
The winged birds were not by half so light,
When through the lazy twilight air they wheel
Home to their brooding mates. But now, methinks,
The heavy earth doth cling around my feet.
I move as every separate limb were gyved
With its particular weight of manacle.
The moonlight that was wont to seem so soft,
So balmy to the slow respired breath,
Icily, shiveringly cold falls on me.
The marble pillars, that soared stately up,
As though to prop the azure vault of heaven,
Hang o'er me with a dull and dizzy weight.

The stones whereon I tread do grimly speak
Forbidding echoes, ay with human voices:
Unbodied arms pluck at me as I pass,
And socketless pale eyes look glaring on me.
But I have pass'd them: and methinks this weight
Might strain more sturdy sinews than mine own.
Howbeit, thank God, 'tis safe! Thank God!—for what?
That a poor honest man's grown a rich villain.

SCENE IV.—*Fazio's House.*

Enter FAZIO *with his sack, which he opens and surveys.*

I thank ye, bounteous thieves! most liberal thieves!
Your daggers are my worship. Have ye leap'd
The broad and sharp-staked trenches of the law,
Mock'd at the deep damnation that attaints
The souls of murderers, for my hands unbloodied,
As delicately, purely white as ever,
To pluck the golden fruitage? Oh, I thank ye,
Will chronicle ye my good friends and true.

Enter BIANCA. (FAZIO *conceals the Treasure.*)

BIANCA.

Nay, Fazio, nay: this is too much: nay, Fazio,
I'll not be humour'd like a froward child,
Trick'd into sleep with pretty tuneful tales.

FAZIO.

We feast the Duke to-morrow: shall it be
In the Adorni or Vitelli palace?
They're both on sale, and each is fair and lofty.

BIANCA.

Why, Fazio, art thou frantic? Nay, look not
So strangely, so unmeaningly. I had rather
That thou would'st weep, than look so wildly joyful.

FAZIO.

Ay, and a glorious banquet it shall be:
Gay servants in as proud caparisons,
As though they served immortal gods with nectar.
Ay, ay, Bianca! there shall be a princess;
She shall be lady of the feast. Let 's see
Your gold and crimson for your fair-hair'd beauties:—
It shall be gold and crimson. Dost thou know
The princess that I mean? Dost thou, Bianca?

BIANCA.

Nay, if thou still wilt flout me, I'll not weep:
Thou shalt not have the pitiful bad pleasure
Of wringing me to misery. I'll be cold
And patient as a statue of my wrongs.

FAZIO.

I have just thought, Bianca, these black stills
An ugly and ill-fitting furniture:
We'll try an they are brittle. (*Dashes them in pieces.*)
I'll have gilding,
Nothing but gilding, nothing but what looks glittering:

I'm sick of black and dingy darkness. Here, (*Uncovering the sack,*)
Look here, Bianca, here's a light! Take care:
Thine eyesight is too weak for such a blaze.
It is not daylight; nay, it is not morn—
And every one is worth a thousand florins.
Who shall be princess of the feast to-morrow?
[*She bursts into tears.*
Within, within, I'll tell thee all within. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Hall in the Palace of Fazio.*

FALSETTO, DANDOLO, PHILARIO, *and a* GENTLEMAN.

FALSETTO.

Serve ye Lord Fazio?

GENTLEMAN.

Ay, sir, he honours me
With his commands.

FALSETTO.

'Tis a brave gentleman!
Tell him Signior Falsetto, and Philario,
The most renowned Improvvisatore,
And Signior Dandolo, the court fashionist,
Present their duty to him.

GENTLEMAN.

Ay, good sirs.
(*Aside*) My master hath a Midas touch; these fellows
Will try if he hath ears like that great king. [*Exit.*

Enter FAZIO, *splendidly dressed.*

FALSETTO.

Most noble lord, most wonderful philosopher!
We come to thank thee, sir, that thou dost honour

Our Florence with the sunlight of your fame.
Thou that hast ravish'd nature of a secret
That maketh thee her very paragon:
She can but create gold, and so canst thou:
But she doth bury it in mire and mirk,
Within the unsunn'd bowels of the earth:
But thou dost set it on the face of the world,
Making it shame its old and sullen darkness.

FAZIO.

Fair sir, this cataract of courtesy
O'erwhelms my weak and unhabituate ears.
If I may venture such uncivil ignorance,
Your quality?

FALSETTO.

I, my good lord, am one
Have such keen eyesight for my neighbours' virtues,
And such a doting love for excellence,
That when I see a wise man, or a noble,
Or wealthy, as I ever hold it pity
Man should be blind to his own merits, words
Slide from my lips; and I do mirror him
In the clear glass of my poor eloquence.

FAZIO.

In coarse and honest phraseology,
A flatterer.

FALSETTO.

Flatterer! Nay, the word's grown gross.
An apt discourser upon things of honour,

Professor of art panegyrical.
'Twere ill were I a hawk to see such bravery,
And not a thrush to sing of it. Wealth, sir,
Wealth is the robe and outward garb of man;
The setting to the rarer jewelry,
The soul's unseen and inner qualities.
And then, my lord, philosophy! 'tis that,
The stamp and impress of our divine nature,
By which we know that we are Gods, and are so.
But wealth and wisdom in one spacious breast!
Who would not hymn so rare and rich a wedding?
Who would not serve within the gorgeous palace,
Glorified by such strange and admired inmates?

FAZIO (*aside*).

Now the poor honest Fazio had disdain'd
Such scurvy fellowship; howbeit, Lord Fazio
Must lacquey his new state with these base jackals.

(*To him.*)

Fair sir, you'll honour me with your company.

(*To Dandolo.*)

May I make bold, sir, with your state and title?

DANDOLO.

Oh, my lord, by the falling of your robe,
Your cloth of gold one whole hair's-breadth too low,
'Tis manifest you know not Signior Dandolo.

FAZIO.

A pitiable lack of knowledge, sir.

DANDOLO.

My lord, thou hast before thee in thy presence
The mirror of the court, the very calendar
That rules the swift revolving round of fashion;
Doth tell what hues do suit what height o' the sun;
When your spring pinks should banish from the court
Your sober winter browns; when July heat
Doth authorize the gay and flaunting yellows;—
The court thermometer, that doth command
Your three-piled velvet abdicate its state
For the airy satins. Oh, my lord, you are too late,
At least three days, with your Venetian tissue.

FAZIO.

I sorrow, sir, to merit your rebuke
On point so weighty.

DANDOLO.

Ay, signior, I'm paramount
In all affairs of boot, and spur, and hose;
In matters of the robe and cap supreme;
In ruff disputes, my lord, there's no appeal
From my irrefragability.

FAZIO.

Sweet sir,
I fear me, such despotic rule and sway
Over the persons of our citizens
Must be of danger to our state of Florence.

DANDOLO.

Good sooth, my lord, I am a very tyrant.

Why, if a senator should presume to wear
A cloak of fur in June, I should indict him
Guilty of leze majesté against my kingship:
They call me Dandolo, the King of Fashions—
The whole empire of dress is my dominion.
Why, if our Duke should wear an ill-grain'd colour
Against my positive enactment, though
His state might shield him from the palpable shame
Of a rebuke; yet, my good lord, opinion,
Public opinion, would hold Signior Dandolo
Merciful in his silence.

FAZIO.

A Lycurgus!

DANDOLO.

Good, my lord! dignity must be upheld
On the strong pillars of severity.
Your cap, my lord, a little to the north-east,
And your sword—thus, my lord—pointed out this way,
[*Adjusting him.*
In an equilateral triangle. Nay,
Nay, on my credit, my good lord, this hose
Is a fair woof. The ladies, sir, the ladies,
(For I foresee you'll be a ruling planet,)
Must not be taught any heretical fancies,
Fantastical infringements of my codes—
Your lordship must give place to Signior Dandolo
About their persons.

FAZIO.

Gentle sir, the ladies
Must be too deeply, irresistibly yours.'.

DANDOLO.

No, signior, no; I'm not one of the gallants
That pine for a fair lip, or eye, or cheek,
Or that poetical treasure, a true heart.
But, my lord, a fair-order'd head-dress makes me
As love-sick as a dove at mating-time:
A tasteful slipper is my soul's delight:
Oh, I adore a robe that drops and floats
As it were lighter than the air around it;
I dote upon a stomacher to distraction,
When the gay jewels, gracefully disposed,
Make it a zone of stars: and then a fan,
The elegant motion of a fan, is murder,
Positive murder to my poor weak senses.

FAZIO (*turning to* PHILARIO.)

But here 's a third: the Improvvisatore,
Gentle Philario, lurks, methinks, behind.

PHILARIO.

Most noble lord! it were his loftiest boast
To wed your honours to his harp. To hymn
The finder of the philosophic stone,
The sovereign prince of alchymists; 'twould make
The cold verse-mechanist, the nice balancer
Of curious words and fair compacted phrases,
Burst to a liquid and melodious flow,

Rapturous and ravishing but in praise of thee!
But I, my lord, that have the fluent vein,
The rapid rush——

FAZIO.

Fie, sir! O fie! 'tis fulsome.
Sir, there 's a soil fit for that rank weed flattery
To trail its poisonous and obscene clusters:
A poet's soul should bear a richer fruitage—
The aconite grew not in Eden. Thou,
That thou, with lips tipt with the fire of heaven,
Th' excursive eye, that in its earth-wide range
Drinks in the grandeur and the loveliness,
That breathes along this high-wrought world of man;
That hast within thee apprehensions strong
Of all that 's pure and passionless and heavenly—
That thou, a vapid and a mawkish parasite,
Should'st pipe to that witch Fortune's favourites!
'Tis coarse—'tis sickly—'tis as though the eagle
Should spread his sail-broad wings to flap a dunghill;
As though a pale and withering pestilence
Should ride the golden chariot of the sun;
As one should use the language of the Gods
To chatter loose and ribald brothelry.

PHILARIO.

My lord, I thank thee for that noble chiding—
Oh, my lord, 'tis the curse and brand of poesy,
That it must trim its fetterless free plumes
To the gross fancies of the humoursome age;

That it must stoop from its bold heights to court
Liquorish opinion, whose aye wavering breath
Is to it as the precious air of life.
Oh, in a capering, chambering, wanton land,
The lozel's song alone gains audience,
Fine loving ditties, sweet to sickliness;
The languishing and luscious touch alone,
Of all the full harp's ecstasies, can detain
The palled and pampered ear of Italy.
But, my lord, we have deeper mysteries
For the initiate——Hark!—it bursts!—it flows!

Song by PHILARIO.

Rich and royal Italy!
Dominion's lofty bride!
Earth deem'd no loss of pride,
To be enslaved by thee.
From broad Euphrates' bank,
When the sun look'd through the gloom,
Thy eagle's golden plume
His orient splendour drank;
And when at eve he set
Far in the chamber'd west,
That bird of brilliance yet
Bathed in his gorgeous rest.

Sad and sunken Italy!
The plunderer's common prey!
When saw the eye of day
So very a slave as thee?

Long, long, a bloody stage
For petty kinglings tame,
Their miserable game
Of puny war to wage.
Or from the northern star
Come haughty despots down,
With iron hand to share
Thy bruised and broken crown.

Fair and fervid Italy!
Lady of each gentler art,
Yet could'st thou lead the heart
In mild captivity.
Warm Raphael's Virgin sprung
To worship and to love,
The enamour'd air above
Rich clouds of music hung.
Thy poets bold and free
Did noble wrong to time,
In their high rhymed majesty
Ravishing thy clime.

Loose and languid Italy!
Where now the magic pow'r
That in thy doleful hour
Made a queen of thee?
The pencil cold and dead,
Whose lightest touch was life;
The old immortal strife
Of thy high poets fled.

From her inglorious urn
Will Italy arise?
Will golden days return
'Neath the azure of her skies?

This is done, oh, this is done,
When the broken land is one;
This shall be, oh, this shall be,
When the slavish land is free.

SCENE II.—*The Public Walks of Florence.*

FAZIO, FALSETTO, DANDOLO, PHILARIO.

FALSETTO.

Yonder, my lord, is the Lady Aldabella,
The star of admiration to all Florence.

DANDOLO.

There, my lord, there is a fair drooping robe—
Would that I were a breath of wind to float it!

FAZIO.

Gentlemen, by your leave I would salute her:
Ye'll meet me anon in the Piazza.

[*Exeunt all but* FAZIO.

Now, lofty woman, we are equal now,
And I will front thee in thy pitch of pride.

Enter ALDABELLA. *She speaks after a salutation on each side.*

Oh, thou and I, Sir, when we met of old,
Were not so distant, nor so chill. My lord—
I had forgot, my lord. You dawning signiors
Are jealous of your state: you great philosophers
Walk not on earth; and we poor groveling beings,
If we would win your eminent regards,
Must meet ye i' the air. Oh, it sits well
This scorn, it looks so grave and reverend.

FAZIO.

Is scorn in Lady Aldabella's creed
So monstrous and heretical?

ALDABELLA.

Again,
Treason again, a most irreverent laugh,
A traitorous jest before so learn'd a sage:—
But I may joy in thy good fortune, Fazio.

FAZIO.

In sooth, good fortune, if 'tis worth thy joy,
The haughty Lady Aldabella's joy.

ALDABELLA.

Nay, an thou hadst not dash'd so careless off
My bounteous offering, I had said—

FAZIO.

What, lady?

ALDABELLA.

Oh nought—mere sound—mere air—Thou'rt married, Fazio:
And is thy bride a jewel of the first water?
I know thou wilt say, Ay; 'tis an old tale,
Thy fond lip-revel on a lady's beauties:
Methinks I've heard thee descant upon loveliness,
Till the full ears were drunken with sweet sounds.
But never let me see her, Fazio; never.

FAZIO.

And why not, lady? She is exquisite,
Bashfully, humbly exquisite; yet Florence
May be as proud of her, as of the richest,
That fire her with the lustre of their state.
And why not, lady?

ALDABELLA.

Why! I know not why—
Oh your philosophy, 'tis ever curious;
Poor lady Nature must tell all, and clearly,
To its inquisitorship.—We'll not think on't:
It fell from me un'wares; words will start forth,
When the mind wanders.—Oh no, not because
She's merely lovely:—but we'll think no more on't.—
Didst hear the act?

FAZIO.

Lady, what act?

ALDABELLA.

The act

Of the great Duke of Florence and his Senate,
Entitled against turtle doves in poesy.
Henceforth that useful bird is interdict,
As the mild emblem of true constancy.
There's a new word found; 'tis pure Tuscan too:
Fazio's to fill the blank up, if it chime;
If not, Heaven help the rhymester.

FAZIO (*apart*).

With what an airy and a sparkling grace
The language glances from her silken lips!
Her once loved voice how exquisite it sounds,
E'en like a gentle music heard in childhood!

ALDABELLA.

Why yes, my lord, in these degenerate days
Constancy is so rare a virtue, angels
Come down to gaze on't: it makes the world proud.
Who would be one o' the many? Why, our Florence
Will blaze with the miracle. 'Tis true, 'tis true,
The odour of the rose grows faint and sickly,
And joys are finest by comparison.
But what is that to the majestic pride
Of being the sole true phœnix?

FAZIO.

Gentle lady,
Thou speak'st as if that smooth word constancy
Were harsh and brassy sounding in thy ears.

ALDABELLA.

No, no, signior; your good old-fangled virtues

Have gloss enough for me, had it been my lot
To be a miser's treasure: if his eyes
Ne'er open'd but on me, I ne'er had wept
At such a pleasant faithful avarice.

FAZIO.

Lady, there was a time when I did dream
Of playing the miser to another treasure,
One not less precious than thy stately self.

ALDABELLA.

Oh yes, my lord, oh yes; the tale did run
That thou and I did love: so ran the tale.
That thou and I should have been wed—the tale
Ran so, my lord.—Oh memory, memory, memory!
It is a bitter pleasure, but 'tis pleasure.

FAZIO.

A pleasure, lady!—why then cast me off
Like an indifferent weed?—with icy scorn
Why choke the blossom that but woo'd thy sunshine?

ALDABELLA.

Ah, what an easy robe is scorn to wear!
'Tis but to wrinkle up the level brow,
To arch the pliant eyelash, and freeze up
The passionless and placid orb within—
Castelli! oh Castelli!

FAZIO.

Who was he, lady?

ALDABELLA.

One, my good lord, I loved most fondly, fatally.

FAZIO.

Then thou didst love? love, Aldabella, truly,
Fervently, fondly?—But what's that to me?

ALDABELLA.

Oh yes, my lord, he was a noble gentleman;
Thou know'st him by his title, Condé d'Orsoa;
My nearest kinsman, my good uncle:—I,
Knowing our passionate and fanciful nature,
To his sage counsels fetter'd my wild will.
Proud was he of me, deem'd me a fit mate
For highest princes; and his honest flatteries
So pamper'd me, the fatal duteousness
So grew upon me—Fazio, dost thou think
My colour wither'd since we parted? Gleam
Mine eyes as they were wont?—Or doth the outside
Still wear a lying smooth indifference,
While the unseen heart is haggard wan with woe?

FAZIO.

Is't possible? And didst thou love me, lady?
Though it be joy vain and unprofitable
As is the sunshine to a dead man's eyes,
Pleasureless from his impotence of pleasure;
Tell me and truly—

ALDABELLA.

My grave sir confessor,
On with thy hood and cowl.—So thou would'st hear
Of pining days and discontented nights;
Ah me's and doleful airs to my sad lute.

Fazio, they suffer most who utter least.
Heaven, what a babbling traitor is the tongue!—
Would not the air freeze up such sinful sound?—
Oh no, thou heard'st it not. Ah me! and thou,
I know, wilt surfeit the coarse common ear
With the proud Aldabella's fall.—Betray me not;
Be charier of her shame than Aldabella.

[FAZIO *falls on his knees to her.*

My lord! my lord! 'tis public here—no more—
I'm staid for at my palace by the Arno.
Farewell, my lord, farewell!—Betray me not:—
But never let me see *her*, Fazio, never.

FAZIO (*solus*).

Love me!—to suffering love me!—why her love
Might draw a brazen statue from its pedestal,
And make its yellow veins leap up with life.
Fair Chastity, thou hast two juggling fiends
Caballing for thy jewel: one within,
And that's a soft and melting devil, Love;
Th' other without, and that's a fair rich gentleman,
Giraldi Fazio: they're knit in a league.
And thou, thou snowy and unsociable virtue,
May'st lose no less a votaress from thy nunnery
Than the most beautiful proud Aldabella.
Had I been honest, 'twere indeed to fall;
But now 'tis but a step down the declivity.
Bianca! but Bianca!—bear me up,
Bear me up, in the trammels of thy fondness

Bind thou my slippery soul. Wrong thee, Bianca?
Nay, nay, that's deep indeed; fathomless deep
In the black pit of infamy and sin:
I am not so weary yet of the upper air.
Wrong thee, Bianca? No, not for the earth;
Not for earth's brightest, not for Aldabella.

Scene III.—*Palace of* Fazio.

FAZIO *and* BIANCA.

FAZIO.

Dost thou love me, Bianca?

BIANCA.

There's a question
For a philosopher!—Why, I've answer'd it
For two long years; and, oh, for many more,
It will not stick upon my lips to answer thee.

FAZIO.

Thou'rt in the fashion, then. The court, Bianca,
The ladies of the court, find me a fair gentleman;
Ay, and a dangerous wit too, that smites smartly.

BIANCA.

And thou believest it all!

FAZIO.

Why, if the gallants,
The lordly and frank spirits of the time,
Troop around thee with gay rhymes on thy beauties,

Tinkling their smooth and amorous flatteries,
Shalt thou be then a solemn infidel?

BIANCA.

I shall not heed them; my poor beauty needs
Only one flatterer.

FAZIO.

Ay, but they'll press on thee,
And force their music into thy deaf ears.
Think ye, ye should be coy, and calm, and cold?

BIANCA.

Oh, no!—I fear me a discourteous laugh
Might be their guerdon for their lavish lying.

FAZIO.

But if one trip upon your lip, or wind
Your fingers in his sportive hand, think ye
Ye could endure it?

BIANCA.

Fazio, thou wrong'st me
With such dishonest questionings. My lord,
There's such an awe in virtue, it can make
The anger of a sleek smooth brow like mine
Strike the hot libertine to dust before me.
He'd dare to dally with a fire in his hand,
Kiss ragged briars with his unholy lips,
Ere with his rash assault attaint my honour.

FAZIO.

But if ye see me by a noble lady,
Whispering as though she were my shrine, whereon

I lay my odorous incense, and her beauty
Grow riper, richer at my cherishing praise;
If she lean on me with a fond round arm,
If her eye drink the light from out mine eyes,
And if her lips drop sounds for my ear only;
Thou'lt arch thy moody brow, look at me gravely,
With a pale anger on thy silent cheek.
'Tis out of keeping; 'tis not the court fashion—
We must forego this clinging and the clasping;
Be cold, and strange, and courteous to each other;
And say, "How doth my lord?" "How slept my lady?"
As though we dwelt at opposite ends o' the city.

BIANCA.

What hath distemper'd thee?—This is unnatural;
Thou could'st not talk thus in thy stedfast senses.
Fazio, thou hast seen Aldabella!——

FAZIO.

Well,
She is no basilisk—there's no death in her eyes.

BIANCA.

Ay, Fazio, but there is; and more than death—
A death beyond the grave—a death of sin—
A howling, hideous, and eternal death—
Death the flesh shrinks from.——No, thou must not see her!
Nay, I'm imperative—thou'rt mine, and shalt not.

FAZIO.

Shalt not!—Dost think me a thick-blooded slave,

To say "Amen" unto thy positive "shalt not?"
The hand upon a dial, only to point
Just as your humourous ladyship choose to shine?

BIANCA.

Fazio, thou sett'st a fever in my brain;
My very lips burn, Fazio, at the thought:
I had rather thou wert in thy winding sheet
Than that bad woman's arms; I had rather grave-worms
Were on thy lips than that bad woman's kisses.

FAZIO.

Howbeit, there is no blistering in their taste:
There is no suffocation in those arms.

BIANCA.

Take heed! we are passionate; our milk of love
Doth turn to wormwood, and that's bitter drinking.
The fondest are most phrenetic: where the fire
Burneth intensest, there the inmate pale
Doth dread the broad and beaconing conflagration.
If that ye cast us to the winds, the winds
Will give us their unruly restless nature;
We whirl and whirl; and where we settle, Fazio,
But he that ruleth the mad winds can know.
If ye do drive the love out of my soul,
That is its motion, being, and its life,
There'll be a conflict strange and horrible,
Among all fearful and ill-visaged fiends,
For the blank void; and their mad revel there
Will make me—oh, I know not what—hate thee!——

Oh, no!—I could not hate thee, Fazio:
Nay, nay, my Fazio, 'tis not come to that;
Mine arms, mine arms, shall say the next "shall not;"
I'll never startle more thy peevish ears,
But I'll speak to thee with my positive lips.

[*Kissing and clinging to him.*

FAZIO.

Oh, what a wild and wayward child am I!—
Like the hungry fool, that in his moody fit
Dash'd from his lips his last delicious morsel.
I'll see her once, Bianca, and but once;
And then a rich and breathing tale I'll tell her
Of our full happiness. If she be angel,
'Twill be a gleam of Paradise to her,
And she'll smile at it one of those soft smiles,
That makes the air seem sunny, blithe, and balmy.
If she be devil——Nay, but that's too ugly;
The fancy doth rebel at it, and shrink
As from a serpent in a knot of flowers.
Devil and Aldabella!—Fie!—They sound
Like nightingales and screech-owls heard together.
What! must I still have tears to kiss away?—
I will return—Good night!—It is but once.
See, thou'st the taste o' my lips now at our parting;
And when we meet again, if they be tainted,
Thou shalt—oh no, thou shalt not, canst not hate me.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene IV.—*Palace of* Aldabella.

ALDABELLA.

My dainty bird doth hover round the lure,
And I must hood him with a skilful hand:
Rich and renown'd, he must be in my train,
Or Florence will turn rebel to my beauty.

Enter CLARA, FAZIO *behind.*

ALDABELLA *goes on.*

Oh, Clara, have ye been to the Ursulines?
What says my cousin, the kind Lady Abbess?

CLARA.

She says, my lady, that to-morrow noon
Noviciates are admitted; but she wonders,
My lady Abbess wonders, and I too
Wonder, my lady, what can make ye fancy
Those damp and dingy cloisters. Oh, my lady!
They'll make you cut off all this fine dark hair——
Why, all the signiors in the court would quarrel,
And cut each other's throats for a loose hair of it.

ALDABELLA.

Ah me! what heeds it where I linger out
The remnant of my dark and despised life?——
Clara, thou weariest me.

CLARA.

Oh, but, my lady,
I saw their dress: it was so coarse and hard-grain'd,
I'm sure 'twould fret your ladyship's soft skin
Like thorns and brambles; and besides, the make on't!—
A vine-dresser's wife at market looks more dainty.

ALDABELLA.

Then my tears will not stain it. Oh, 'tis rich enough
For lean and haggard sorrow. (*Appearing to perceive* FAZIO, *exit* CLARA.) Oh, my lord!
You're timely come to take a long farewell.
Our convent gates are rude, and black, and close;
Our Ursuline veils of such a jealous woof,
There must be piercing in those curious eyes,
Would know if the skin beneath be swarth or snowy.

FAZIO.

A convent for the brilliant Aldabella;
The mirror of all rival lovelinesses,
The harp to which all gay thoughts lightly dance,
Mew'd in the drowsy silence of a cloister!

ALDABELLA.

Oh, what regards it, if a blind man lie
On a green lawn or on a steamy moor!
What heeds it to the dead and wither'd heart,
Whose faculty of rapture is grown sere,
Hath lost distinction between foul and fair,
Whether it house in gorgeous palaces,
Or mid wan graves and dismal signs of care!

Oh, there 's a grief, so with the threads of being
Ravelled and twined, it sickens every sense:
Then is the swinging and monotonous bell
Musical as the rich harp heard by moonlight;
Then are the limbs insensible if they rest
On the coarse pallet or the pulpy down.

FAZIO.

What mean ye, lady?—thou bewilder'st me.
What grief so wanton and luxurious
Would choose the lady Aldabella's bosom
To pillow on?

ALDABELLA.

Oh, my lord, untold love——
Nay, Fazio, gaze not on me so; my tongue
Can scarcely move for the fire within my cheeks—
It cankereth, it consumeth, untold love.
But if it burst its secret prison-house,
And venture on the broad and public air,
It leagueth with a busy fiend call'd Shame;
And they both dog their game, till misery
Fastens upon it with a viper's fang,
And rings its being with its venomous coil.

FAZIO.

Misery and thee!—oh, 'tis unnatural!—
Oh, yoke thee to that thing of darkness, misery!—
That Ethiop, that grim Moor!—it were to couple
The dove and kite within one loving leash.
It must not be; nay, ye must be divorced.

ALDABELLA.

Ah no, my lord! we are too deeply pledged.
Dost thou remember our old poet's * legend
Over Hell gates—"Hope comes not here?" Where hope
Comes not, is hell; and what have I to hope?

FAZIO.

What hast to hope?—Thou'rt strangely beautiful——

ALDABELLA.

Would'st thou leave flattery thy last ravishing sound
Upon mine ears?—'Tis kind, 'tis fatally kind.

FAZIO.

Oh, no! we must not part, we must not part.
I came to tell thee something: what, I know not.
I only know one word that should have been;
And that——Oh! if thy skin were seam'd with wrinkles,
If on thy cheek sate sallow hollowness,
If thy warm voice spake shrieking, harsh, and shrill;
But to that breathing form, those ripe round lips,
Like a full parted cherry, those dark eyes,
Rich in such dewy languors——I'll not say it——
Nay, nay, 'tis on me now!—Poison 's at work!
Now listen to me, lady——We must love.

ALDABELLA.

Love!—Ay, my lord, as far as honesty.

FAZIO.

Honesty!—'Tis a stale and musty phrase;

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* Dante.

At least at court: and why should we be traitors
To the strong tyrant Custom?

ALDABELLA.

My lord Fazio—
Oh, said I *my* lord Fazio?—thou'lt betray me:
The bride—the wife—she that I mean——My lord,
I am nor splenetic nor envious;
But 'tis a name I dare not trust my lips with.

FAZIO.

Bianca, oh Bianca is her name;
The mild Bianca, the soft fond Bianca.
Oh to that name, e'en in the Church of God,
I pledged a solemn faith.

ALDABELLA.

Within that Church
Barren and solitary my sad name
Shall sound, when the pale nun profess'd doth wed
That her cold bridegroom Solitude: and yet—
Her right—ere she had seen you, we had loved.

FAZIO (*franticly*).

Why should we dash the goblet from our lips,
Because the dregs may have a smack of bitter?
Why should that pale and clinging consequence
Thrust itself ever 'twixt us and our joys?

ALDABELLA.

My lord, 'tis well our convent walls are high,
And our gates massy; else ye raging tigers
Might rush upon us simple maids unveil'd.

FAZIO.

A veil! a veil! why Florence will be dark
At noonday: or thy beauty will fire up,
By the contagion of its own bright lustre,
The dull dead flax to so intense a brilliance,
'Twill look like one of those rich purple clouds
On the pavilion of the setting sun.

ALDABELLA.

My lord, I've a poor banquet here within;
Will't please you taste it?

FAZIO.

Ay, wine, wine! ay, wine!
I'll drown thee, thou officious preacher, here! (*Clasping his forehead*).
Wine, wine! [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Palace of* FAZIO.

BIANCA.

Not all the night, not all the long, long night,
Not come to me! not send to me! not think on me!
Like an unrighteous and unburied ghost,
I wander up and down these long arcades.
Oh, in our old poor narrow home, if haply
He linger'd late abroad, domestic things
Close and familiar crowded all around me;
The ticking of the clock, the flapping motion
Of the green lattice, the grey curtains' folds,
The hangings of the bed myself had wrought,
Yea e'en his black and iron crucibles,
Were to me as my friends. But here, oh here,
Where all is coldly, comfortlessly costly,
All strange, all new in uncouth gorgeousness,
Lofty and long, a wider space for misery—
E'en my own footsteps on these marble floors
Are unaccustom'd, unfamiliar sounds.—
Oh, I am here so wearily miserable,
That I should welcome my apostate Fazio,
Though he were fresh from Aldabella's arms.

Her arms!—her viper coil!——I had forsworn
That thought; lest he should come, and find me mad,
And so go back again, and I not know it.
Oh that I were a child to play with toys,
Fix my whole soul upon a cup and ball—
Oh any pitiful poor subterfuge,
A moment to distract my busy spirit
From its dark dalliance with that cursed image!
I have tried all: all vainly—Now, but now
I went in to my children. The first sounds
They murmur'd in their evil-dreaming sleep
Was a faint mimicry of the name of father.
I could not kiss them, my lips were so hot.
The very household slaves are leagued against me,
And do beset me with their wicked floutings,
"Comes my lord home to-night?"—and when I say,
"I know not," their coarse pity makes my heartstrings
Throb with the agony.—(*Enter* PIERO.)—Well, what of
my lord?
Nay, tell it with thy lips, not with thy visage.
Thou raven, croak it out if it be evil:
If it be good, I'll fall and worship thee;
'Tis the office and the ministry of gods
To speak good tidings to distracted spirits.

PIERO.

Last night my lord did feast—

BIANCA.

Speak it at once—

Where? where?—I'll wring it from thy lips.—Where? where?

PIERO.

Lady, at the Marchesa Aldabella's.

BIANCA.

Thou liest, false slave: 'twas at the Ducal Palace,
'Twas at the arsenal with the officers,
'Twas with the old rich senator—him—him—him—
The man with a brief name: 'twas gaming, dicing,
Riotously drinking.—Oh it was not there;
'Twas any where but there—or if it was,
Why like a sly and creeping adder sting me
With thy black tidings?—Nay, nay: good my friend;
Here's money for those harsh intemperate words.—
But he's not there: 'twas some one of the gallants,
With dress and stature like my Fazio.
Thou wert mistaken:—no, no; 'twas not Fazio.

PIERO.

It grieves me much; but, lady, 'tis my fear
Thou'lt find it but too true.

BIANCA.

Hence! hence! Avaunt,
With thy cold courteous face! Thou seest I'm wretched:
Doth it content thee? Gaze—gaze—gaze!—perchance
Ye would behold the bare and bleeding heart,
With all its throbs, its agonies.—Oh Fazio!
Oh Fazio! Is her smile more sweet than mine?
Or her soul fonder?—Fazio, my lord Fazio!

Before the face of man mine own, mine only;
Before the face of Heaven Bianca's Fazio,
Not Aldabella's.—Ah, that I should live
To question it!—Now henceforth all our joys,
Our delicate endearments, all are poison'd.
Ay! if he speak my name with his fond voice,
It will be with the same tone that to her
He murmur'd hers:—it will be, or 'twill seem so.
If he embrace me, 'twill be with those arms
In which he folded her: and if he kiss me,
He'll pause, and think which of the two is sweeter.

PIERO.

Nay, my good lady, give not entertainment
To such sick fancies: think on lighter matters.
I heard strange news abroad: the Duke's in council,
Debating on the death of old Bartolo,
The grey lean usurer. He's been long abroad,
And died, they think.

BIANCA.

Well, sir, and what of that?
And have I not the privilege of sorrow,
Without a menial's staring eye upon me?
Who sent thee thus to charter my free thoughts,
And tell them where to shrink, and where to pause?
Officious slave, away!—(*Exit.*)—Ha! what saidst thou?
Bartolo's death! and the Duke in his council!—
I'll rend him from her, though she wind around him,
Like the vine round the elm. I'll pluck him off,

Though the life crack at parting.—No, no pause;
For if there be, I shall be tame and timorous:
That milk-faced mercy will come whimpering to me,
And I shall sit and meekly, miserably
Weep o'er my wrongs.—Ha! that her soul were fond
And fervent as mine own! I would give worlds
To see her as he's rent and torn from her.
Oh, but she's cold; she cannot, will not feel.
It is but half revenge: her whole of sorrow
Will be a drop to my consummate agony.—
Away, away: oh had I wings to waft me!

SCENE II.—DUKE *and his* COUNCIL.

DUKE.

'Tis passing strange, a man of such lean habits,
Wealth flowing to him in a steady current,
Winds wafting it unto him from all quarters,
Through all his seventy toilsome years of life,
And yet his treasury so spare and meagre;
Signior Gonsalvo, were the voice that told us
Less tried and trusty than thine own, our faith
Would be a rebel to such marvellous fact.

GONSALVO.

Well may your Highness misdoubt me, myself
Almost misdoubting mine own positive senses.
No sign was there of outward violence,
All in a state of orderly misery.

No trace of secret inroad; yet, my liege,
The mountains of his wealth were puny molehills,
A few stray ducats; piles indeed of parchments,
Mortgages, deeds, and lawsuits heaped to the roof,
Enough to serve the armies of all Tuscany
At least for half a century with new drumheads.

AURIO.

Haply, my liege, he may have gone abroad,
And borne his riches with him.

DUKE.

Signior Aurio,
That surmise flavours not of your known wisdom.
His argosies encumber all our ports,
His unsold bales rot in the crowded wharfs;
The interest of a hundred usuries
Lieth unclaim'd.—Besides, he hath not left
Our city for this twenty years:—a flight
So unprepared and wanton suits not well
Your slow and heavy laden usurer.

Enter ANTONIO.

My liege, a lady in the antechamber
Boasts knowledge that concerns your this day's council.

DUKE.

Admit her.—(*Enter* BIANCA.)—How! what know'st thou of the death

Of old Bartolo?—be he dead in sooth—
Or of his riches?

BIANCA.

The east side o' the fountain,
In the small garden of a lowly house,
By the Franciscan convent, the green herbs
Grow boon and freely, the manure is rich
Around their roots: dig there, and you'll be wiser.

DUKE.

Who tenanted this house?

BIANCA.

Giraldi Fazio.

DUKE.

What of his wealth?

BIANCA.

There's one in Florence knows
More secrets than beseems an honest man.

DUKE.

And who is he?

BIANCA.

Giraldi Fazio.

GONSALVO.

My liege, I know him: 'tis the new sprung signior,
This great philosopher. I ever doubted
His vaunted manufactory of gold,
Work'd by some strange machinery.

DUKE.

Theodore,

Search thou the garden that this woman speaks of.
Captain Antonio, be't thy charge to attach
With speed the person of this Fazio.

BIANCA (*rushing forward to* ANTONIO).
You'll find him at the Marchesa Aldabella's:
Bring him away—no mercy—no delay—
Nay, not an instant—not time for a kiss,
A parting kiss. (*Aside.*) Now have I widow'd her,
As she has widow'd me! Now come what will,
Their curst entwining arms are riven asunder.

DUKE.
And thou, thou peremptory summoner!
Most thirsty after justice! speak——Thy name?

BIANCA.
Bianca.

DUKE.
Thy estate wedded or single?

BIANCA.
My lord——

DUKE.
Give instant answer to the court.

BIANCA.
Oh, wedded, but most miserably single.

DUKE.
Woman, thou palterest with our dignity.
Thy husband's name and quality?—Why shakest thou,
And draw'st the veil along thy moody brow,
As thou too wert a murderess?—Speak, and quickly.

BIANCA (*faltering*).

Giraldi Fazio.

DUKE.

'Tis thy husband then—
Woman, take heed, if, petulant and rash,
Thou would'st abuse the righteous sword of law,
That brightest in the armoury of man,
To a peevish instrument of thy light passions,
Or furtherance of some close and secret guilt:
Take heed, 'tis in the heaven stamp'd roll of sins,
To bear false witness——Oh, but 'gainst thy husband,
Thy bosom's lord, flesh of thy flesh!—To set
The bloodhounds of the law upon his track!
If thou speak'st true, stern justice will but blush
To be so cheer'd upon her guilty prey.
If it be false, thou givest to flagrant sin
A heinous immortality. This deed
Will chronicle thee, woman, to all ages,
In human guilt a portent and an era:
'Tis of those crimes, whose eminent fame Hell joys at;
And the celestial angels, that look on it,
Wish their keen airy vision dim and narrow.

Enter THEODORE.

My liege, e'en where she said, an unstripp'd corpse
Lay carelessly inearth'd, old weeds hung on it,
Like those that old Bartolo wont to wear;

And under the left rib a small stiletto,
Rusted within the pale and creeping flesh.

Enter ANTONIO *with* FAZIO.

My liege, the prisoner.

DUKE.

Thou'rt Giraldi Fazio.
Giraldi Fazio, thou stand'st here arraign'd,
That, with presumption impious and accurst,
Thou hast usurp'd God's high prerogative,
Making thy fellow mortal's life and death
Wait on thy moody and diseased passions;
That with a violent and untimely steel
Hast set abroach the blood, that should have ebb'd
In calm and natural current: to sum all
In one wild name—a name the pale air freezes at,
And every cheek of man sinks in with horror—
Thou art a cold and midnight murderer.

FAZIO.

My liege, I do beseech thee, argue not,
From the thick clogging of my clammy breath,
Aught but a natural and instinctive dread
Of such a bloody and ill-sounding title.
My liege, I do beseech thee, whate'er reptile
Hath cast this filthy shame of slander on me,
Set him before me face to face: the fire
Of my just anger shall burn up his heart,

Make his lip drop, and powerless shuddering
Creep o'er his noisome and corrupted limbs,
Till the gross lie choke in his wretched throat.

DUKE.

Thou'rt bold.—But know ye aught of old Bartolo?
Methinks, for innocence, thou'rt pale and tremulous—
That name is to thee as a thunderclap;
But thou shalt have thy wish——Woman, stand forth;
Nay, cast away thy veil.——Look on her, Fazio.

FAZIO.

Bianca!——No, it is a horrid vision!
And, if I struggle, I shall wake, and find it
A miscreated mockery of the brain.
If thou'rt a fiend, what hellish right hast thou
To shroud thy leprous and fire-seamed visage
In lovely lineaments, like my Bianca's?
If thou'rt indeed Bianca, thou wilt wear
A ring I gave thee at our wedding time.
In God's name do I bid thee hold it up;
And, if thou dost, I'll be a murderer,
A slaughterer of whole hecatombs of men,
So ye will rid me of the hideous sight.

DUKE.

Giraldi Fazio, hear the court's award:
First, on thy evil-gotten wealth the State
Setteth her solemn seal of confiscation;
And for thyself——

BIANCA (*rushing forward*).

Oh, we'll be poor again!
Oh, I forgive thée!—We'll be poor and happy!
So happy, the dull day shall be too short for us.
She loved thee, that proud woman, for thy riches;
But thou canst tell why I love Fazio.

DUKE.

And for thyself—'Tis in the code of Heaven,
Blood will have blood—the slayer for the slain.
Death is thy doom—the public, daylight death.
Thy body do we give unto the wheel:
The Lord have mercy on thy sinful soul!

BIANCA.

Death!—Death!—I meant not that!——Ye mean not that!
What's all this waste and idle talk of murther?
He slay a man—with tender hands like his?—
With delicate mild soul?——Why, his own blood
Had startled him! I've seen him pale and shuddering
At the sad writhings of a trampled worm:
I've seen him brush off with a dainty hand
A bee that stung him. Oh, why wear ye thus
The garb and outward sanctity of law?
What means that snow upon your reverend brows,
If that ye have no subtler apprehension
Of some inherent harmony in the nature
Of bloody criminal and bloody crime?
'Twere wise t'arraign the soft and silly lamb

Of slaughtering his butcher: ye might make it
As proper a murderer as my Fazio.

DUKE.

Woman, th'irrevocable breath of justice
Wavers not: he must die.

BIANCA.

Die! Fazio die!——
Ye grey and solemn murderers by charter!
Ye ermined manslayers! when the tale is rife!
With blood and guilt, and deep and damning, oh,
Ye suck it in with cold insatiate thirst:
But to the plea of mercy ye are stones,
As deaf and hollow as the unbowell'd winds.
Oh, ye smooth Christians in your tones and looks.
But in your hearts as savage as the tawny
And misbelieving African! ye profane,
Who say, "God bless him! God deliver him!"
While ye are beckoning for the bloody axe,
To smite the unoffending head!—his head!—
My Fazio's head!—the head this bosom cherish'd
With its first virgin fondness.

DUKE.

Fazio, hear.
To-morrow's morning sun shall dawn upon thee:
But when he setteth in his western couch,
He finds thy place in this world void and vacant.

BIANCA.

To-morrow morning!—Not to-morrow morning!

The damning devils give a forced faint pause,
If the bad soul but feebly catch at heaven.
But ye, but ye, unshriven, unreconciled,
With all its ponderous mass of sins, hurl down
The bare and shivering spirit.—Oh, not to-morrow!

DUKE.

Woman, thou dost outstep all modesty:
But for strong circumstance, that leagues with thee,
We should contemn thee for a wild mad woman,
Raving her wayward and unsettled fancies.

BIANCA.

Mad! mad!—ay, that it is!—ay, that it is!
Is't to be mad to speak, to move, to gaze,
But not know how, or why, or whence, or where?
To see that there are faces all around me,
Floating within a dim discolour'd haze,
Yet have distinction, vision, but for one?
To speak with rapid and continuous flow,
Yet know not how the unthought words start from me?
Oh, I am mad, wildly, intensely mad.
'Twas but last night the moon was at the full;
And ye, and ye, the sovereign and the sage,
The wisdom and the reverence of all Florence,
E'en from a maniac's dim disjointed tale,
Do calmly judge away the innocent life,
The holy human life, the life God gave him.

DUKE.

Giraldi Fazio, hast thou aught to plead

Against the law, that with imperious hand
Grasps at thy forfeit life?

FAZIO.

My liege, this soul
Rebels not, nay, repines not at thy sentence:
Yet, oh! by all on earth, by all hereafter,
All that hath cognizance o'er unseen deeds,
Blood is a colour stranger to these hands.
But there are crimes within me, deep and black,
That with their clamorous and tumultuous voices
Shout at me, "Thou should'st die, thy sins are deadly:"
Nor dare my oppressed heart return, "'Tis false."

BIANCA.

But I, I say, 'tis false; he is not guilty:
Not guilty unto death: I say he is not.
God gave ye hearing, but ye will not hear;
God gave ye feeling, but ye will not feel;
God gave ye judgment, but ye falsely judge.

DUKE.

Captain Antonio, guard thy prisoner.
If it be true, blood is not on thy soul,
Yet thou object'st not to the charge of robbery?

[FAZIO *bows.*

Thou dost not. Robbery, by the laws of Florence,
Is sternly coded as a deadly crime:
Therefore, I say again, Giraldi Fazio,
The Lord have mercy on thy sinful soul!

[*They follow the* DUKE.

BIANCA (*seizing and detaining* AURIO).

My lord! my lord! we have two babes at home—
They cannot speak yet; but, your name, my lord,
And they shall lisp it, ere they lisp mine own—
Ere that poor culprit's yonder, their own father's.
Befriend us, oh, befriend us! 'Tis a title
Heaven joys at, and the hard and savage earth
Doth break its sullen nature to delight in—
The destitute's sole friend——And thou pass too!
Why, what a common liar was thy face,
That said the milk of mercy flow'd within thee!——
Ye're all alike.—Off! off!—Ye're all alike.

[*Exeunt all but* FAZIO, *the Officer, and* BIANCA.

BIANCA (*creeping to* FAZIO).

Thou wilt not spurn me, wilt not trample on me,
Wilt let me touch thee—I, whose lips have slain thee.
Oh, look not on me thus, with that fond look—
Pamper me not, for long and living grief
To prey upon—Oh, curse me, Fazio—
Kill me with cursing: I am thin and feeble—
A word will crush me—any thing but kindness.

FAZIO.

Mine own Bianca! I shall need too much mercy
Or ere to-morrow, to be merciless.
It was not well, Bianca, in my guilt
To cut me off—thus early—thus unripe:
It will be bitter, when the axe falls on me,
To think whose voice did summon it to its office.—

No more—no more of that: we all must die.
Bianca, thou wilt love me when I'm dead:
I wrong'd thee, but thou'lt love me when I'm dead.

BIANCA.

What, kiss me, kiss me, Fazio!—'tis too much:
And these warm lips must be cold clay to-morrow.

ANTONIO.

Signior, we must part hence.

BIANCA.

What! tear me from him,
When he has but a few short hours to give me!
Rob me of them!—He hath lain delicately:
Thou wilt not envy me the wretched office
Of strewing the last pillow he shall lie on—
Thou wilt not—nay, there's moisture in thine eye—
Thou wilt not.

ANTONIO.

Lady, far as is the warrant
Of my stern orders—

BIANCA.

Excellent youth! Heaven thank thee!
There's not another heart like thine in Florence.
We shall not part, we shall not part, my Fazio!
Oh, never, never, never—till *to-morrow*.

FAZIO (*as he leads her out*).

It was not with this cold and shaking hand
I led thee virgin to the bridal altar. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Prison.*

FAZIO *and* BIANCA.

FAZIO.

Let's talk of joy, Bianca: we'll deceive
This present and this future, whose grim faces
Stare at us with such deep and hideous blackness:
We'll fly to the past. Dost thou remember, love,
Those gentle moonlights, when my fond guitar
Was regular, as convent vesper hymn,
Beneath thy lattice, sometimes the light dawn
Came stealing on our voiceless intercourse,
Soft in its grey and filmy atmosphere?

BIANCA.

Oh yes, oh yes!—There'll be a dawn *to-morrow*
Will steal upon us.—Then, oh then——

FAZIO.

Oh, think not on't!—
And thou remember'st too that beauteous evening
Upon the Arno; how we sail'd along,
And laugh'd to see the stately towers of Florence
Waver and dance in the blue depth beneath us.

How carelessly thy unretiring hand
Abandon'd its soft whiteness to my pressure?

BIANCA.

Oh yes!——*To-morrow* evening, if thou close
Thy clasping hand, mine will not meet it then—
Thou'lt only grasp the chill and senseless earth.

FAZIO.

Thou busy, sad remembrancer of evil!——
How exquisitely happy have we two
Sate in the dusky and discolour'd light,
That flicker'd through our shaking lattice bars!
Our children at our feet, or on our laps,
Warm in their breathing slumbers, or at play
With rosy laughter on their cheeks!—Oh God!——
Bianca, such a flash of thought cross'd o'er me,
I dare not speak it.

BIANCA.

Quick, my Fazio!
Quick, let me hav't!—*to-morrow* thou'lt not speak it.

FAZIO.

Oh, what a life must theirs be, those poor innocents!
When they have grown up to a sense of sorrow—
Oh, what a feast will they be for rude misery!
Honest men's boys and girls, whene'er they mingle,
Will spurn them with the black and branded title,
"The murderer's children." Infamy will pin
That pestilent label on their backs; the plague-spot
Will swell and blister on them till their death-beds;

And if they beg—for beggars they must be—
They'll drive them from their doors with cruel jeers
Upon my riches, villainously style them
"The children of Lord Fazio, the philosopher."

BIANCA.

To-morrow will the cry begin, *to-morrow*.——
It must not be, and I sit idle here.
Fazio, there must be in this wide, wide city
Piercing and penetrating eyes for truth,
Souls not too proud, too cold, too stern for mercy.
I'll hunt them out and swear them to our service.
I'll raise up something—oh, I know not what—
Shall boldly startle the rank air of Florence
With proclamation of thy innocence.
I'll raise the dead! I'll conjure up the ghost
Of that old rotten thing, Bartolo; make it
Cry out i' the market place, "Thou didst not slay him!"
Farewell, farewell! If in the walls of Florence
Be any thing like hope or comfort, Fazio,
I'll clasp it with such strong and stedfast arms,
I'll drag it to thy dungeon, and make laugh
This silence with strange uncouth sounds of joy.

SCENE II.—*A Street.*

FALSETTO, DANDOLO, PHILARIO.

FALSETTO.

Good Signior Dandolo, here's a prodigal waste
Of my fair speeches to the sage philosopher.
I counted on at least a two months' diet,
Besides stray boons of horses, rings, and jewels.

DANDOLO.

Oh my Falsetto, a coat of my fashion
Come to the wheel !—it wrings my very heart,
To fancy how the seams will crack, or haply
The hangman will be seen in't !—That I should live
To be purveyor of the modes to a hangman !

Enter BIANCA.

They pass me by on the other side of the street ;
They spurn me from their doors ; they load the air
With curses that are flung on me : the Palace,
The Ducal Palace, that should aye be open
To voice of the distress'd, as is God's heaven,
Is ring'd around with grim and armed savages
That with their angry weapons smite me back,
As though I came with fire in my hand, to burn
The royal walls : the children in the streets
Break off their noisy games to hoot at me ;

And the dogs from the porches howl me on.
But here's a succour.—(*To* FALSETTO.) Oh, good sir,
thy friend,
The man thou feastedst with but yesterday,
He to whose motion thou wast a true shadow,
Whose hand rain'd gifts upon thee—he I mean,
Fazio, the bounteous, free, and liberal Fazio—
He's wrongfully accused, wrongfully doom'd:
I swear to thee 'tis wrongfully.—Oh, sir,
An eloquent honey-dropping tongue like thine,
How would it garnish up his innocence,
Till Justice would grow amorous, and embrace it!

FALSETTO.

Sweet lady, thou o'ervaluest my poor powers:—
Any thing in reason to win so much loveliness
To smile on me.—But this were wild and futile.

BIANCA.

In reason?—'Tis to save a human life—
Is not that in the spacious realm of reason?—
Kind sir, there's not a prayer will mount hereafter
Heavenward from us or our poor children's lips,
But in it thy dear name will rise embalm'd:
And prayers have power to cancel many a sin,
That clogs and flaws our base and corrupt nature.

FALSETTO.

Methinks, good Dandolo, 'tis the hour we owe
Attendance at the Lady Portia's toilette.—
Any commission in our way, fair lady?

DANDOLO.

Oh yes! I'm ever indispensable there
As is her looking-glass.—

BIANCA.

Riotous madness!
To waste a breath, (*detaining them*) upon such thin-blown bubbles!
Why thou didst cling to him but yesterday,
As 'twere a danger of thy life to part from him;
Didst swear it was a sin in Providence
He was not born a prince. (*To* DANDOLO.) And thou, sir, thou—
Chains, sir, in May—it is a heavy wear;
Hard and unseemly, a rude weight of iron.—
Faugh! cast ye off this shape and skin of men;
Ye stain it, ye pollute it: be the reptiles
Ye are. (*To* PHILARIO.) And thou, sir—I know in whose porch
He hired thee to troll out thy fulsome ditties:
I know whose dainty ears were last night banqueted
With the false harlotry of thy rich airs.

PHILARIO.

I do beseech thee, lady, judge me not
So harshly. In the state, Heaven knows, I'm powerless:
I could remove yon palace walls as soon
As alter his sad doom. But if to visit him,
To tend him with a soft officious zeal,
Waft the mild magic of mine art around him,

Making the chill and lazy dungeon air
More smooth, more gentle to the trammell'd breathing:—
All that I can I will, to make his misery
Slide from him light and airily.

BIANCA.

Wilt thou?
Why then there's hope the Devil hath not all Florence.
Go—go!—I cannot point thee out the way:
Mine eyes are cloudy; it is the first rain
Hath dewed them, since—since when I cannot tell thee.
Go—go!—(*Exit.*)—One effort more; and if I fail—
But by the inbred and instinctive tenderness
That mingles with the life of womanhood,
I cannot fail: and then, thou grim to-morrow,
I'll meet thee with a bold and unblench'd front.

Scene III.—*Palace of* Aldabella.

ALDABELLA.

Fazio in prison! Fazio doom'd to die!—
I was too hasty; should have fled, and bashfully
Beckon'd him after; lured him, not seized on him.
Proud Aldabella a poor robber's paramour;
Oh it sounds dismal! Florence must not hear it:—
And sooth his time is brief to descant on it.—

(*To* Bianca, *who enters.*)

And who art thou thus usherless and unbidden
Scarest my privacy?

BIANCA (*aside*).

I must not speak yet;
For if I do, a curse will clog my utterance.

ALDABELLA.

Nay, stand not with thy pale lips quivering nothings—
Speak out, and freely.

BIANCA.

Lady, there is one—
Fie, fie upon this choking in my throat—
One thou didst love, Giraldi Fazio:
One who loved thee, Giraldi Fazio.—
He's doom'd to die, to die to-morrow morning;
And lo 'tis eve already!—

ALDABELLA.

He is doom'd?—
Why then the man must die.—

BIANCA.

Nay, gentle lady,
Thou'rt high-born, rich, and beautiful: the princes,
The prime of Florence wait upon thy smiles,
Like sunflowers on the golden light they love.
Thy lips have such sweet melody, 'tis hung upon
Till silence is an agony. Did it plead
For one condemn'd, but oh most innocent,
'Twould be a music th' air would fall in love with,
And never let it die, till it had won
Its honest purpose. "

ALDABELLA.

What a wanton waste
Of idle praise is here!

BIANCA.

Nay think, oh think,
What 'tis to give again a forfeit life:
Ay, such a life as Fazio's!—Frown not on me:
Thou think'st that he's a murderer—'tis all false;
A trick of Fortune, fancifully cruel,
To cheat the world of such a life as Fazio's.

ALDABELLA.

Frivolous and weak: I could not if I would.

BIANCA.

Nay, but I'll lure thee with so rich a boon—
Hear—hear, and thou art won. If thou dost save him,
It is but just he should be saved for thee.
I give him thee—Bianca—I his wife:—
I pardon all that has been, all that may be—
Oh I will be thy handmaid; be so patient—
Calmly, contentedly, and sadly patient—
And if ye see a pale or envious motion
Upon my cheek, a quivering on my lips,
Like to complaint—then strike him dead before me.
Thou shalt enjoy all—all that I enjoy'd:—
His love, his life, his sense, his soul be thine;
And I will bless thee, in my misery bless thee.

ALDABELLA.

What mist is on thy wild and wandering eyes?

Know'st thou to whom and where thou play'st the raver?
I, Aldabella, whom the amorous homage
Of rival lords and princes stirs no more
Than the light passing of the common air—
I, Aldabella, when my voice might make
Thrones render up their stateliest to my service—
Stoop to the sordid sweepings of a prison?
I—

BIANCA.

Proud-lipp'd woman, earth's most gorgeous sovereigns
Were worthless of my Fazio! Foolish woman,
Thou cast'st a jewel off! The proudest lord
That ever revell'd in thy unchaste arms,
Was a swarth galley-slave to Fazio.
Ah me! me! me! e'en I his lawful wife
Know it not more truly, certainly than thou.—
Hadst thou loved him, I had pardon'd, pitied thee:
We two had sate, all coldly, palely sad;
Dropping, like statues on a fountain side,
A pure, a silent, and eternal dew.
Hadst thou outwept me, I had loved thee for't—
And that were easy, for I'm stony here. (*Putting her hands to her eyes.*)

ALDABELLA.

Ho there! to th' hospital for the lunatics!
Fetch succour for this poor distraught—

BIANCA.

What said I?
Oh pardon me, I came not to upbraid thee.—
Think, think—I'll whisper it, I'll not betray thee;
The air 's a tell-tale, and the walls are listeners:—
Think what a change! Last night within thy chamber;
(I'll not say in thy arms; for that displeases thee,
And sickens me to utter,) and to-night
Upon a prison pallet, straw, hard straw;
For eastern perfumes, the rank noisome air;
For gentle harpings, shrilly clanking chains:—
Nay, turn not off: the worst is yet to come.
To-morrow at his waking, for thy face
Languidly, lovingly down drooping o'er him,
The scarr'd and haggard executioner.

ALDABELLA (*turning away*).

There is a dizzy trembling in mine eye;
But I must dry the foolish dew for shame.
Well, what is it to me? I slew him not;
Nay, nor denounced him to the judgment seat.
I but debase myself to lend free hearing
To such coarse fancies.—I must hence: to-night
I feast the lords of Florence. [*Exit.*

BIANCA.

They're all lies:
Things done within some far and distant planet,
Or offscum of some dreamy poet's brain,
All tales of human goodness. Or they're legends

Left us of some good old forgotten time,
Ere harlotry became a queenly sin,
And housed in palaces. Oh, earth's so crowded
With Vice, that if strange Virtue stray abroad,
They hoot it from them like a thing accurst.
Fazio, my Fazio!—but we'll laugh at them:
We will not stay upon their wicked soil,
E'en though they sue us not to die and leave them.

Scene IV.—Fazio's *House.*

BIANCA.

Ah, what a fierce and frantic coil is here,
Because the sun must shine on one man less!
I'm sick and weary—my feet drag along.
Why must I trail, like a scotch'd serpent, hither?
Here, to this house, where all things breathe of Fazio?
The air tastes of him—the walls whisper of him.—
Oh, I'll to bed! to bed!——What find I there?
Fazio, my fond, my gentle, fervent Fazio?—
No!——Cold stones are his couch, harsh iron bars
Curtain his slumbers.—Oh, no, no—I have it—
He is in Aldabella's arms.——Out on't!
Fie, fie!—that's rank, that's noisome!——I remember—
Our children—ay, my children—Fazio's children.
'Twas my thoughts' burthen as I came along,
Were it not wise to bear them off with us

Away from this cold world?—Why should we breed up
More sinners for the Devil to prey upon?
There's one a boy—some strumpet will enlace him,
And make him wear her loathsome livery.
The other a girl: if she be ill, she'll sink
Spotted to death—she'll be an Aldabella:
If she be chaste, she'll be a wretch like me,
A jealous wretch, a frantic guilty wretch.——
No, no: they must not live, they must not live!

[*Exit into a chamber.*

After a pause she returns.

It will not be, it will not be—they woke
As though e'en in their sleep they felt my presence;
And then they smiled upon me fondly, playfully,
And stretch'd their rosy fingers to sport with me:
The boy did arch his eyebrows so like Fazio,
Though my soul wish'd that God would take them to him,
That they were 'scaped this miserable world,
I could but kiss them; and, when I had kissed them,
I could as soon have leap'd up to the moon
As speck'd or soil'd their alabaster skins.——
Wild that I am!—Take them to another world——
As though I, I my husband's murderess,
In the dread separation of the dead,
Should meet again those spotless innocents!——
Oh, happy they!—they will but know to-morrow
By the renewal of the soft warm daylight.

[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Street—Morning Twilight.*

BIANCA.

Where have I been?—I have not been at rest—
There's yet the stir of motion in my limbs.
Oh, I remember—'twas a hideous strife
Within my brain: I felt that all was hopeless,
Yet would not credit it; and I set forth
To tell my Fazio so, and dared not front him
With such cold comfort. Then a mist came o'er me,
And something drove me on, and on, and on,
Street after street, each blacker than the other,
And a blue axe did shimmer through the gloom—
Its fiery edge did waver to and fro—
And there were infants' voices, faint and failing,
That panted after me. I knew I fled them;
Yet could not choose but fly. And then, oh then,
I gazed and gazed upon the starless darkness,
And blest it in my soul, for it was deeply
And beautifully black—no speck of light;
And I had feverish and fantastic hopes,
That it would last for ever, nor give place
To th' horrible *to-morrow*.——Ha, 'tis there!—

'Tis the grey morning light aches in mine eyes—
It is that *morrow!*——Ho!—Look out, look out!
With what a hateful and unwonted swiftness
It scares my comfortable darkness from me!——
Fool that I am!—I've lost the few brief hours
Yet left me of my Fazio!—Oh, away,
Away to him!—away! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The Prison—totally dark, except a lamp.*

FAZIO *and* PHILARIO.

FAZIO.

I thank thee: 'twas a melancholy hymn;
But soft and soothing as the gale of eve,
The gale, whose flower-sweet breath no more shall pass o'er me.
Oh, what a gentle ministrant is music
To piety—to mild, to penitent piety!
Oh, it gives plumage to the tardy prayer,
That lingers in our lazy earthly air,
And melts with it to heaven——To die, 'tis dreary;
To die a villain's death, that's yet a pang.
But it must down: I have so steep'd my soul
In the bitter ashes of true penitence,
That they have put on a delicious savour,
And all is halcyon quiet, all within.
Bianca!—Where is she?—why comes she not?——

Yet I do almost wish her not to come,
Lest she again enamour me of life.

PHILARIO.

Hast thou no charge to her, no fond bequest?—
It shall lose little by my bearing it.

FAZIO.

Oh yes, oh yes!—I have her picture here:
That I had seen it in one hour of my life,
In Aldabella's arms had it look'd on me,
I should have had one sin less to repent of.
I'm loth the coarse and vulgar executioner
Should handle it with his foul gripe, or pass
His ribald jests upon it.—Give it her.

[*With the picture he draws out some gold, on which he looks with great apparent melancholy.*

PHILARIO.

And this too, sir?

FAZIO.

Oh, touch it not, Philario!
Oh, touch it not!—'tis venomous, 'tis viperous!
If there be bottomless sea, unfathom'd pit
In earth's black womb—oh, plunge it, plunge it deep,
Deep, dark! or if a devil be abroad,
Give it to him, to bear it whence it came,
To its own native Hell.—Oh no, no, no!—
He must not have it: for with it he'll betray
More men, more noble spirits than Lucifer
Drew down from heaven. This yellow pestilence

Laid waste my Eden; made a gaudy bird of me,
For soft temptation's silken nets to snare.
It crept in to us—Sin came with it—Misery
Dogg'd its foul footsteps—ever-deepening Sin,
And ever-darkening Misery.——Philario,
Away with it!—away!—(*Takes the picture.*) Here's
fairer gazing.
Thou would'st not think these smooth and smiling lips
Could speak away a life—a husband's life.
Yet ah! I led the way to sin—I wrong'd her:
Yet, Heaven be witness, though I wrong'd her, loved her,
E'en in my heart of heart.

Enter BIANCA.

Who's that, Bianca,
That's loved so deeply?——Fazio, Fazio, Fazio—
It is that *morrow!*——

FAZIO.

Nay, look cheeringly:
It may be God doth punish in this world
To spare hereafter.

BIANCA.

Fazio, set me loose!—
Thou clasp'st thy murderess.

FAZIO.

No, it is my love,
My wife, my children's mother!—Pardon me,
Bianca; but thy children——I'll not see them:

For on the wax of a soft infant's memory
Things horrible sink deep and sternly settle.
I would not have them, in their after-days,
Cherish the image of their wretched father
In the cold darkness of a prison-house.
Oh, if they ask thee of their father, tell them
That he is dead, but say not how.

BIANCA.

No, no—
Not tell them, that their mother murder'd him.

FAZIO.

But are they well, my love?

BIANCA.

What, had I freed them
From this drear villains' earth, sent them before us,
Lest we should miss them in another world,
And so be fetter'd by a cold regret
Of this sad sunshine?

FAZIO.

Oh, thou hast not been
So wild a rebel to the will of God!
If that thou hast, 'twill make my passionate arms,
That ring thee round so fondly, drop off from thee,
Like sere and wither'd ivy; make my farewell
Spoken in such suffocate and distemper'd tone,
'Twill sound more like——

BIANCA.

They live! thank God, they live!

I should not rack thee with such fantasies:
But there have been such hideous things around me,
Some whispering me, some dragging me; I've felt
Not half a moment's calm since last we parted,
So exquisite, so gentle, as this now—
I could sleep on thy bosom, Fazio.

Enter ANTONIO.

... Prisoner,
Thine hour is come.

BIANCA.

It is not morning yet—
Where is the twilight that should usher it?
Where is the sun, that should come golden on?
Ill-favour'd liar, to come prate of morning,
With torchlight in thy hand to scare the darkness.

ANTONIO.

Thou dost forget; day's light ne'er pierceth here:
The sun hath kindled up the open air.

BIANCA.

I say, 'tis but an hour since it was evening,
A dreary, measureless, and mournful hour,
Yet but an hour.

FAZIO.

I will obey thee, officer!
Yet but a word—Bianca, 'tis a strange one—
Canst thou endure it, dearest?—Aldabella——

BIANCA.

Curse her!

FAZIO.

Peace, peace:—'tis dangerous: sinners' curses
Pluck them down tenfold from the angry heavens
Upon the curser's head—Beseech thee, peace!—
Forgive her—for thy Fazio's sake, forgive her.

BIANCA.

Any thing not to think on her——Not yet—
They shall not kill thee—by my faith they shall not!
I'll clasp mine arms so closely round thy neck,
That the red axe shall hew them off, ere shred
A hair of thee: I will so mingle with thee,
That they shall strike at random, and perchance
Set me free first——

[*The bell sounds, her grasp relaxes, and she stands torpid.*

FAZIO (*kissing her, which she does not seem to be conscious of*).

Farewell, farewell, farewell!—
She does not feel, she does not feel!—Thank Heaven,
She does not feel her Fazio's last, last kiss!—
One other!—Cold as stone—sweet, sweet as roses.

[*Exit.*

BIANCA (*slowly recovering*).

Gone, gone!—he is not air yet, not thin spirit!—
He should not glide away—he is not guilty——
Ye murder and not execute—Not guilty.

[*Exit, followed by* PHILARIO.

SCENE III.—*A magnificent Apartment in the Palace of* ALDABELLA—*Every appearance of a ball prolonged till morning*—DUKE, LORDS, FALSETTO, DANDOLO, *and* ALDABELLA.

DUKE.

'Tis late, 'tis late; the yellow morning light
Streams in upon our sick and waning lamps.
It was a jocund night: but good my friends,
The sun reproves our lingering revelry;
And, angry at our scorning of his state,
Will shine the slumber from our heavy eyes.

GONSALVO.

There's one, my liege, will sleep more calm than we:
But now I heard the bell with iron tongue
Speak out unto the still and solemn air
The death-stroke of the murderer Fazio.

DUKE.

So, lady, fare thee well: our gentlest thanks
For thy fair entertaining.—Ha! what's here?

Enter BIANCA, *followed by* PHILARIO.

BIANCA.

Ha! ye've been dancing, dancing—so have I:
But mine was heavy music, slow and solemn—

A bell, a bell: my thick blood roll'd to it,
My heart swung to and fro, a dull deep motion.

(*Seeing* ALDABELLA.)

'Tis thou, 'tis thou!—I came to tell thee something.

ALDABELLA (*alarmed and shrieking*).

Ah me! ah me!

BIANCA.

Nay, shrink not—I'll not kill thee:
For if I do, I know, in the other world,
Thou'lt shoot between me and my richest joys.—
Thou shalt stay here—I'll have him there—all—all of him.

DUKE.

What means the wild-hair'd maniac?

BIANCA (*moving him aside*).

By and by——

(*To* ALDABELLA.)

I tell thee, that warm cheek thy lips did stray on
But yesternight, 'tis cold and colourless:
The breath, that stirr'd among thy jetty locks,
That was such incense to thee—it is fled:
The voice, that call'd thee then his soul of soul—
I know it—'twas his favourite phrase of love—
I've heard it many a time myself—'twas rapturous;
That mild, that musical voice is dumb and frozen:
The neck whereon thine arms did hang so tenderly,

There's blood upon it, blood—I tell thee, blood.
Dost thou hear that? is thy brain fire to hear it?
Mine is, mine is, mine is.

DUKE.

'Tis Fazio's wife.

BIANCA.

It is not Fazio's wife.—Have the dead wives?
Ay, ay, my liege, and I know thee, and well—
Thou art the rich-robed minister of the laws.
Fine laws! rare laws! most equitable laws!
Who robs his neighbour of his yellow dust,
Or his bright sparkling stones, or such gay trash—
Oh, he must die, die for the public good.
And if one steal a husband from his wife,
Do dive into her heart for its best treasure,
Do rend asunder whom Heaven link'd in one—
Oh, they are meek, and merciful, and milky—
'Tis a trick of human frailty——Oh, fine laws!
Rare laws! most equitable laws!

DUKE.

Poor wretch,
Who is it thus hath wrong'd thee?

BIANCA (*to the* DUKE).

Come thou here.

The others crowd around her—she says to FALSETTO.

Get back, get back: the god that thou adoredst,
Thy god is dead, thou pitiful idolater!

To DANDOLO, *showing her dress.*

I know they're coarse and tatter'd—Get thee back.

To the DUKE.

I tell thee, that rich woman—she——My liege,
I'll speak anon—my lips do cling together—
There's dust about my tongue—I cannot move it.

DUKE.

Ho, there!—some wine!

BIANCA.

Thank thee, 'tis moist—I thank thee!
(*As she raises the goblet to her lips, she sees* ALDABELLA, *and dashes it away.*)
Her lips have been upon it—I'll have none on't.

ALDABELLA.

My liege, thou wilt not hearken to the tale
Of a mad woman, venting her sick fancies
Upon a lady of my state and honour!

DUKE.

Lady, there is one state alone, that holds
Above the range of plumed and restless Justice
Her throned majesty—the state of Virtue.——
Poor sad distraught, speak on.

BIANCA.

I am not mad,
Thou smooth-lipp'd slanderer!—I have been mad,
And then my words came vague, and loose, and broken;

But now, there's mode and measure in my speech.
I'll hold my brain; and then I'll tell my tale
Simply and clearly.——Fazio, my poor Fazio—
He murder'd not—he found Bartolo dead.
The wealth did shine in his eyes, and he was dazzled.
And when that he was gaily gilded up,
She, she, I say, (nay, keep away from her,
For she hath witchcraft all around her,) she
Did take him to her chamber——Fie, my liege!
What should my husband in her chamber?—Then,
Ay then, I madden'd.——Hark! hark! hark!—the bell,
The bell that I set knolling—hark!—Here, here,
Massy and cold it strikes—Here, here. (*Clasping her forehead.*)

GONSALVO.

Sad woman!
Tear not so piteously thy disorder'd hair!

BIANCA.

I do not tear my hair: there should be pain
If that I did; but all my pain's within (*with her hand to her bosom*).
It will not break, it will not break—'tis iron.

DUKE.

If this be true——

PHILARIO.

My liege, it is the tale
That Fazio told me ere he died.

BIANCA.

Ay, sir,
The dying lie not—he, a dying man,
Lied not—and I, a dying woman, lie not:
For I shall die, spite of this iron here.

DUKE (*to* ALDABELLA).

There is confession in thy guilty cheeks.
Thou high-born baseness! beautiful deformity!
Dishonour'd honour!—How hast thou discredited
All that doth fetter admiration's eye,
And made us out of love with loveliness!
I do condemn thee, woman, by the warrant
Of this my ducal diadem, to put on thee
The rigid convent vows: there bleach anew
Thy sullied breast; there temper thy rank blood;
Lay ashes to thy soul; swathe thy hot skin
In sackcloth; and God give thee length of days,
T' atone, by this world's misery, this world's sin.

[*Exit* ALDABELLA.

BIANCA.

Bless thee, Heaven bless thee!—Yet it must not be.
My Fazio said we must forgive her—Fazio
Said so; and all he said is best and wisest.

DUKE.

She shall have her desert: aught more to ask of us?

BIANCA.

My children—thou'lt protect them——Oh, my liege,
Make them not rich: let them be poor and honest.

DUKE.

I will, I will.

BIANCA.

Why then 'tis time, 'tis time.
And thou believ'st he is no murderer? (DUKE *bows assent.*) ...
Thou'lt lay me near him, and keep her away from us.
It breaks, it breaks, it breaks—it is not iron. [*Dies.*

NALA AND DAMAYANTI,

AND

OTHER POEMS;

TRANSLATED FROM THE SANSCRIT INTO ENGLISH VERSE, WITH MYTHOLOGICAL AND CRITICAL NOTES.

TO MY MOTHER,

TO WHOM THESE TRANSLATIONS HAVE AFFORDED MUCH PLEASURE,

AND TO WHOM, AT HER ADVANCED AGE,

TO HAVE AFFORDED PLEASURE,

IS THE MOST GRATIFYING REWARD OF LITERARY LABOUR,

THESE POEMS ARE INSCRIBED,

BY HER AFFECTIONATE SON.

PREFACE.

Those friends who have taken an interest in my literary productions may feel some surprise at my appearance in the character of a translator of Sanscrit poetry. To them, and indeed to all who may take up the present volume, I owe some explanation of my pretensions as a faithful interpreter of my original text. Those pretensions are very humble; and I can unfeignedly say, that if the field had been likely to be occupied by others, who might unite poetical powers with a profound knowledge of the sacred language of India, I should have withdrawn at once from the competition. But, in fact, in this country the students of oriental literature, endowed with a taste and feeling for poetry, are so few in number, that any attempt to make known the peculiar character of those remarkable works, the old mythological epics of India, may be received with indulgence by all who are interested in the history of poetry. Mr. Wilson alone, since Sir W. Jones, has united a poetical genius with deep Sanscrit scholarship; but he has in general preferred the later and more polished period—that of Kalidasa and the dramatists—to the ruder, yet, in my opinion, not less curious and poetical strains of the older epic bards.

A brief account of the manner in which I became engaged in these studies, will best explain the extent of my proficiency. During the last two years in which I held the office of Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford, having exhausted the subject which I had chosen for my terminal course, I was at a loss for some materials for the few remaining lectures before my office should expire. I had been led by the ardent curiosity, which I have ever felt to acquire some knowledge of the poetry of all ages and nations—to examine some of the publications of French and German, as well as English scholars, on the subject of Indian poetry; chiefly those of the Schlegels, of Bopp, and of De Chezy. I was struck with the singularity and captivated by the extreme beauty, as it appeared to me, of some of the extracts, especially those from the great epic poems, the Mahabharat and the Ramayana, in their Homeric simplicity so totally opposite to the ordinary notions entertained of all eastern poetry. I was induced to attempt, without any instruction, and with the few elementary works which could be procured, the Grammars of Wilkins and Bopp, the Glossaries of Bopp and Rosen, (Mr. Wilson's Dictionary was then out of print and could not be purchased,) to obtain some knowledge of this wonderful and mysterious language. The study grew upon me, and would have been pursued with more ardour, perhaps with more success, but for the constant interruption of more imperative professional and literary avocations. In itself the Sanscrit is an inexhaustible subject of interest; in its grammatical structure more regular, artificial, and copious, than the most perfect of the western lan-

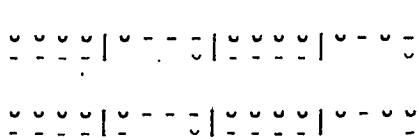
guages; in its origin, the parent from which the older Greek, the Latin and the Teutonic tongues, seem to branch out and develop themselves upon distinct and discernible principles.

I ventured to communicate to the members of the University, who attended my lectures, my discoveries, as it were, in the unknown region of Indian poetry, and to introduce translations of such passages as appeared to me of peculiar singularity or beauty. Though I was still moving in the leading-strings of my learned guides, I had obtained sufficient acquaintance with the language to compare their interpretations with the original text. I afterwards embodied some parts of my lectures in an article in the Quarterly Review, in order to contribute as far as was in my power to open this new and almost untrodden field of literature to the English reader.

Still I should not have presumed to form these translations into a separate work, nor acceded to the proposal of the publisher of the present volume, who has himself deserved so well of the students of oriental lore by his excellent translation, or rather recomposition, of Adelung's "Historical Sketch of Sanscrit Literature," but for the encouragement and assistance of Mr. Wilson, now, the University may be proud to say, the Boden Professor of Sanscrit at Oxford. To his most friendly care in revising these sheets, I owe the correction of many errors; and Sanscrit scholars will find in the notes some observations on the text, which will contribute to elucidate the poem of Nala. Under

the sanction of Mr. Wilson's revision, I may venture to hope that the translation is, at least, an accurate version of the original; and I cannot too strongly express my gratitude for the labour which Mr. Wilson has been so kind as to expend on my imperfect and unpretending work.

The versification, or rather the metrical system, which I have adopted, is an experiment, how far a successful one must be judged by others. The original verse in which the vast epics of Vyasa and Valmiki are composed is called the Sloka, which is thus described by Schlegel in his Indische Bibliothek, p. 36 :— "The oldest, most simple, and most generally adopted measure is the Sloka; a distich of two sixteen-syllable lines, divided at the eighth syllable." According to our prosodial marks, the following is the scheme :—



The first four syllables are bound by no rule; the second half, on the contrary, is unalterably fixed, excepting that the last syllable has the common licence of termination. In the second half verse, I do not remember a single instance of deviation from this, though sometimes, but very seldom, the first half verse ends with another quadrisyllable foot. The reader who is curious on the subject, may compare Mr. Colebrooke's elaborate essays on

Sanscrit poetry, Kosegarten's preface to his Translation of Nala, and Bopp's preface to his Translation of Selections from the Mahabharat.

In the first translations which I attempted, a few passages from the Bhagavat-Gíta, I adhered as nearly as possible to the measure of the original; in the Nala, in order to give the narrative a more easy and trochaic flow, I omitted one syllable, and in some degree changed the structure of the verse.

July, 1835.

The episode of Nala is extracted from the Vanaparvam, the third part of the Mahábhárata, the great Indian poem, which contains 100,000 slokas, or distichs. The sage, Vrihadasva, relates the story of Nala to king Yudhishthira, in order to console him under the miseries to which he was exposed by bad success in play. By the terms of the gaming transaction, in which he was worsted by Sakuni, who threw the dice for Duryodhana, he was condemned to wander with his brothers for twelve years in the forest. The adventures of Nala showed how that king, having been in the same manner unfortunate with the dice, had suffered still greater toil and misery, and had at length recovered his kingdom and his wife. The popularity of this fable with the natives is sufficiently proved by the numerous poetic versions of the story. The Nalodaya, a poem ascribed to Kalidas, should first be mentioned. A new edition of this work has been recently published by Férdinand Benary; we have a notice of it in the Quarterly Review: it seems to bear the same relation to the simple and national episode of the Mahábhárat, as the seicentesti of Italy to Dante or Ariosto, or Gongora to the poem of the Cid. Another poem called Naishadha, in twenty-two books, does not complete the story, but only carries it as far as the fifteenth book. There is a Tamulic version of the same story, translated by Kindersley, in his specimens of Hindu Literature. The third book of the poem of Sriharsha, containing 135 slokas, is entirely occupied with the conversation between Damayanti and the swans (the geese), in which the birds, to excite her love, dwell with diffuse eloquence on the praises of Nala.

NALA AND DAMAYANTI.

BOOK I.

Lived of yore, a raja, Nala,—Virasena's mighty son,
Gifted he with every virtue,—beauteous, skilled in taming steeds:
Head of all the kings of mortals—like the monarch of the gods,
Over, over all exalted—in his splendour like the sun:
Holy, deep-read in the Vedas—in Nishadha lord of earth;
Loving dice, of truth unblemished—chieftain of a mighty host.
The admired of noble women—generous, with each sense subdued.
Guardian of the state; of archers—best, a present Manu he.

So there dwelt in high Vidarbha—Bhima, terrible in strength,
With all virtues blest, but childless—long for children had he pined.
Many an holy act, on offspring—still intent, had he performed.
To his court there came a Brahmin,—Damana the seer was named.
Him the child-desiring Bhima—in all duties skilled, received,
Feasted with his royal consort—in his hospitable hall.
Pleased on him the grateful Daman,—and his queen a boon bestowed,
One sweet girl, the pearl of maidens—and three fair and noble sons.
Damayanti, Dama, Dânta—and illustrious Damana,
Richly gifted with all virtues—mighty, fearful in their might.
Damayanti with her beauty—with her brilliance, brightness, grace,
Through the worlds, unrivalled glory,—won the slender-waisted maid.

Her, arrived at bloom of beauty,—sate a hundred slaves around,
And a hundred virgin handmaids—as around great Indra's queen.
In her court shone Bhima's daughter—decked with every ornament,
Mid her handmaids, like the lightning—shone she with her faultless form;
Like the long-eyed queen of beauty—without rival, without peer.
Never mid the gods immortal—never mid the Yaksha race,
Nor 'mong men was maid so lovely—ever heard of, ever seen,
As the soul-disturbing maiden—that disturbed the souls of gods.
Nala too, 'mong kings the tiger—peerless among earthly men,
Like Kandarpa in his beauty—like that bright embodied God.
All around Vidarbha's princess—praised they Nala in their joy;
Ever praised they Damayanti—round Nishadha's noble king.
Hearing so each other's virtues—all unseen they 'gan to love.
Thus of each, O son of Kunti,—the deep silent passion grew.
Nala, in his heart impatient—longer that deep love to bear,
To the grove, in secret, wandered—by the palace' inmost court. [gold:
There the swans he saw disporting—with their wings bedropped with
Through the grove thus lightly moving—one of these bright birds he caught.
But the bird, in human language,—thus the wondering king addressed
"Slay me not, O gentle monarch!—I will do thee service true;
"So in Damayanti's presence—will I praise Nishadha's king,
"Never after shall the maiden—think of mortal man but thee."
Thus addressed, at once the monarch—let the bright-winged bird depart.
Flew away the swans rejoicing—to Vidarbha straight they flew;
To Vidarbha's stately city:—there by Damayanti's feet, [flock,
Down with drooping plumes they settled—and she gazed upon the
Wondering at their forms so graceful—where amid her maids she sate.
Sportively began the damsels—all around to chase the birds;
Scattering flew the swans before them—all about the lovely grove.
Lightly ran the nimble maidens,—every one her bird pursued;

But the swan that through the forest—gentle Damayanti chased,
Suddenly, in human language,—spake to Damayanti thus.
"Damayanti, in Nishadha—Nala dwells, the noble king,
"Like the Aswinas in beauty,—peerless among men is he.
"O incomparable princess—to this hero wert thou wed,
"Noble birth and perfect beauty—not unworthy fruit had borne.
"Gods, Gandharvas, men, the Serpents,—and the Rákshasas we've
"All we've seen—of noble Nala—never have we seen the peer. [seen,
"Pearl art thou among all women—Nala is the pride of men.
"If the peerless wed the peerless—blessed must the union be."
When the bird thus strangely speaking—gentle Damayanti heard,
Answered thus the wondering maiden—"Thus to Nala, speak thou too."
"Be it so," replied the egg-born—to Vidarbha's beauteous maid.
Home then flew he to Nishadha—and to Nala told it all.

BOOK II.

Damayanti, ever after—she the swan's sweet speech had heard,
With herself she dwelt no longer—all herself with Nala dwelt.
Lost in thought she sate dejected—pale her melancholy cheek,
Damayanti sate and yielded—all her soul to sighs of grief.
Upward gazing, meditative—with a wild distracted look,
Wan was all her soft complexion—and with passion heart-possessed,
Nor in sleep nor gentle converse—nor in banquets found she joy;
Night nor day she could not slumber—Woe! oh woe! she wept and said.
Her no longer her own mistress—from her looks, her gesture, knew
Damayanti's virgin handmaids—to Vidarbha's monarch they
Told how pined his gentle daughter—for the sovereign of men.
This from Damayanti's maidens—when the royal Bhima heard,
In his mind he gravely pondered—for his child what best were done.
"Wherefore is my gentle daughter—from herself in mind estranged?"

When the lord of earth his daughter—saw in blooming youth mature,
Knew he for the Swayembara—Damayanti's time was come.
Straight the lord of many peasants—summoned all the chiefs of earth,
"Come ye to the Swayembara—all ye heroes of the world!"
Damayanti's Swayembara—soon as heard the kings of men,
All obeyed king Bhima's summons—all to Bhima's court drew near;
Elephants, and steeds, and chariots—swarmed along the sounding land;
All with rich and various garlands—with his stately army each—
All the lofty-minded rajas—Bhima with the arm of strength,
As beseemed, received with honour—on their thrones of state they sate.
At this very hour the wisest—of the sages, the divine,
Moving in their might, ascended—up from earth to Indra's world.
Great in holiness and wisdom—Narada and Parvatas
Honoured entered they the palace—of the monarch of the gods.
Them salutes the cloud-compeller—of their everlasting weal,
Of their weal the worlds pervading—courteous asks the immortal lord.

NARADA *spake.*

Well it fares with us, Immortal—in our weal the world partakes—
In the world, O cloud-compeller—well it fares with all her kings.

VRIHADASVA *spake.*

He that Bali slew and Vritri—asked of Narada again—
All earth's just and righteous rulers—reckless of their lives in fight,
Who the shafts' descending death-blow—meet with unaverted eye—
Theirs this everlasting kingdom—even as Kamadhuk is mine.
Where are they, the Kshetriya heroes?—wherefore see I not approach
All the earth's majestic guardians—all mine ever-honoured guests.
Thus addressed by holy Sakra—Narada replied and said:
"Hear me now, O cloud-compeller—why earth's kings appear not here.
"Of Vidarbha's king the daughter—Damayanti, the renowned;
"Through the earth the loveliest women—in her beauty she transcends—
"Soon she holds her Swayembara—soon her lord the maid will choose.

"Thither all the kings are hastening—thither all the sons of kings.
"Suitors for her hand the rajas—her of all the world the pearl,
"O thou mighty giant slayer!—one and all approach to woo."
As they spake, the world-protectors—with the god of fire drew near;
Of the immortals all, the highest—stood before the king of gods.
As they all stood silent hearing—Narada's majestic speech,
All exclaimed in sudden rapture—thither we likewise will go;
All the immortals on the instant,—with their chariots, with their hosts,
Hastened down towards Vidarbha—where the lords of earth were met.
Nala, too, no sooner heard he—of that concourse of the kings,
Set he forth with soul all sanguine—full of Damayanti's love.
Saw the gods, king Nala standing—on the surface of the earth;
Standing in transcendent beauty—equal to the god of love.
Him beheld the world's high guardians—in his radiance like the sun;
Each arrested stood and silent—at his peerless form amazed.
All their chariots the celestials—in the midway air have checked,
Through the blue air then descending—they Nishadha's king address.
"Ho! what, ho! Nishadha's monarch—Nala, king, for truth renowned;
"Do our bidding, bear our message—O, most excellent of men."

BOOK III.

NALA made his solemn promise,—"all your bidding will I do;"
Then with folded hands adoring—humbly of their will inquired.
"Who are ye? to whom must Nala—as your welcome herald go?
"What is my commanded service?—tell me, mighty gods, the truth."
Spake the sovereign of Nishadha—Indra answered thus and said:
"Know us, the Immortals, hither—come for Damayanti's love.
"Indra I, and yon is Agni,—and the king of waters there—
"Slayer he of mortal bodies,—Yama, too, is here, O king!
"Thou, O Nala, of our coming—must to Damayanti tell: [down,
"Thee to see, the world's dread guardians—Indra and the rest came

" Indra, Agni, Varun, Yama,—each to seek thine hand are come.
" One of these celestial beings,—choose, O maiden, for thy lord."
Nala, thus addressed by Indra—with his folded hands replied :
" Thus with one accord commanding—on this mission send not me.
" How can man, himself enamoured—for another plead his cause ?
" Spare me then, ye gods, in mercy—this unwelcome service, spare."

THE GODS *spake.*

" I will do your bidding freely—thus thou'st said, Nishadha's king ;
" Wilt thou now belie thy promise ?—Nala, go, nor more delay."
By the gods adjured so sternly—thus rejoined Nishadha's king :
" Strictly guarded is yon palace—how may I find entrance there ?"
" Thou shalt enter ; " thus did Indra—to the unwilling king reply.
In the bower of Damayanti—as they spake, king Nala stood.
There he saw Vidarbha's maiden—girt with all her virgin bands ;
In her glowing beauty shining—all excelling in her form ;
Every limb in smooth proportion—slender waist and lovely eyes ;
Even the moon's soft gleam disdaining—in her own o'erpowering light.
As he gazed, his love grew warmer—to the softly smiling maid,
Yet to keep his truth, his duty—all his passion he suppressed.
Then Nishadha's king beholding—all those maids with beauteous limbs
From their seats sprang up in wonder—at his matchless form amazed.
In their rapture to king Nala—all admiring, homage paid ;
Yet, not venturing to accost him,—in their secret souls adored.
" Oh the beauty ! oh the splendour !—oh the mighty hero's strength !
" Who is he, or God, or Yaksha—or Gandharba may he be."
Not one single word to utter,—dared that fair-limbed maiden band ;
All struck dumb before his beauty—in their bashful silence stood.
Smiling, first, upon the monarch—as on her he gently smiled,
Damayanti, in her wonder—to the hero Nala spake :
" Who art thou of form so beauteous—thou that wakenest all my love ;
" Cam'st thou here like an immortal—I would know thee, sinless chief,
" How hast entered in our palace ?—how hast entered all unseen ?
" Watchful are our chamber wardens—stern the mandate of the king."

By the maiden of Vidarbha—Nala thus addressed replied:
"Know, O loveliest, I am Nala—here the messenger of gods,
"Gods desirous to possess thee;—one of these, the lord of heaven
"Indra, Agni, Varun, Yama,—choose thou, princess, for thy lord.
"Through their power, their power almighty—I have entered here unseen;
"As I entered in thy chamber—none hath seen, and none might stay.
"This, the object of my mission,—fairest, from the highest gods,
"Thou hast heard me, noble princess—even as thou wilt, decide."

BOOK IV.

To the gods performed her homage—smiled she, and to Nala spake:
"Pledge to me thy faith, O raja—how that faith may I requite?
"I myself, and whatsoever—in the world I have, is thine,
"In full trust is thine—O grant me—in thy turn thy love, O king!
"'Tis the swan's enamouring language—that hath kindled all my soul.
"Only for thy sake, O hero—are the assembled rajas met.
"But if thou mine homage scornest—scornest me, all honoured king,
"Poison for thy sake, fire, water,—the vile noose will I endure."
So, when spake Vidarbha's maiden—Nala answered thus, and said:
"With the world's dread guardians present—will thou mortal husband choose? [pared,
"We with them, the world's creators—with these mighty lords com-
"Lowlier than the dust they tread on—raise to them thy loftier mind.
"Man the gods displeasing, hastens—to inevitable death— [gods.
"Fair limbed! from that fate preserve me—choose the all excelling
"Robes by earthly dust unsullied—crowns of amaranthine flowers,
"Every bright celestial glory—wedded to the gods, enjoy.
"He who all the world compressing—with devouring might consumes,
"Sovereign of the gods, Hutáśa,—where is she who would not wed?
"He, in awe of whose dread sceptre—all the assembled hosts of men,

"Cultivate eternal justice—where is she who would not wed?
"Him the all-righteous, lofty minded,—slayer of the infernal host,
"Of all gods, the mighty monarch,—who is she that would not wed?
"Nor let trembling doubt arrest thee—in thy mind if thou couldst choose.
"Varuna, amongst earth's guardians,—hear the language of a friend."
To the sovereign of Nishadha—Damayanti spake, and said,
And her eyes grew dim with moisture—flowing from her inward grief:
"To the gods, to all, my homage—king of earth, I humbly pay;
"Yet thee only, thee, my husband—may I choose, Be this my vow!"
Answered he the trembling maiden—as with folded hands she stood,
"Bound upon this solemn mission—mine own cause how dare I urge?
"Plighted by a sacred promise—to the everlasting gods;
"Thus engaged to plead for others—for myself I may not plead.
"This my duty; yet hereafter—come I on my own behalf,
"Then I'll plead mine own cause boldly—weigh it, beauteous, in thy thought."
Damayanti smiled serenely,—and with tear-impeded speech,
Uttered brokenly and slowly—thus to royal Nala spake:—
"Yet I see a way of refuge—'tis a blameless way, O king';
"Whence no sin to thee, O raja,—may by any chance arise.
"Thou, O noblest of all mortals—and the gods by Indra led,
"Come and enter in together—where the Swayembara meets;
"Then will I, before the presence—of the guardians of the world,
"Name thee, lord of men! my husband—nor to thee may blame accrue."
By the maiden of Vidarbha—royal Nala thus addressed,
Back again returned, where waited—eager, the expecting gods.
Him the guardians of the world, the mighty—ere he yet drew near, beheld,
Him they saw, and bade him instant—all his tidings to unfold:
"Was she seen of thee, O monarch—Damayanti with soft smile?
"Spake she of us all? what said she?—tell, O blameless lord of earth."

NALA *spake.*

To the bower of Damayanti—on your solemn mission sent,
Entered I the lofty portal—by the aged warders watched ;
Mortal eye might not behold me—there as swift I entered in ;
None save that fair raja's daughter—through your all-prevailing power.
And her virgin handmaids, saw I—and by them in turn was seen ;
And they all in mute amazement—gazed upon me as I stood.
I described your godlike presence—but the maid with beauteous face
Chooses me, bereft of reason—O most excellent of gods !
Thus she spake, that maiden princess,—" Let the gods together come,
" Come with thee, Oh king of mortals,—where the Swayembara meets ;
" There will I, before their presence—choose thee, raja, for my lord.
" So to thee, O strong armed warrior—may no blame, no fault ensue."
Thus it was, even as I tell you—word for word did it befal.
Plainly have I spoke, the judgment—rests with you of gods the chief !

BOOK V.

CAME the day of happy omen—moonday meet, and moment apt ;
Bhima to the Swayembara—summoned all the lords of earth.
One and all, upon the instant—rose th' enamoured lords of earth,
Suitors all to Damayanti—in their loving haste they came.
They, the court with golden columns—rich, and glittering portal arch,
Like the lions on the mountains—entered they the hall of state.
There the lords of earth were seated—each upon his several throne ;
All their fragrant garlands wearing—all with pendent ear-gems rich.
Arms were seen robust and vigorous—as the ponderous battle mace,
Some like the five-headed serpents—delicate in shape and hue :
With bright locks profuse and flowing—fine formed nose, and eye and brow,
Shone the faces of the rajas—like the radiant stars in heaven.
As with serpents, Bhogavati—the wide hall was full of kings ;
As the mountain caves with tigers—with the tiger-warriors full.

Damayanti in her beauty—entered on that stately scene,
With her dazzling light entrancing—every eye and every soul.
O'er her lovely person gliding—all the eyes of those proud kings;
There were fixed, there moveless rested—as they gazed upon the maid.
Then as they proclaimed the rajas—(by his name was each proclaimed)
In dismay saw Bhima's daughter—five in garb, in form the same.
On those forms, all undistinguished—each from each, she stood and gazed.
In her doubt Vidarbha's princess—Nala's form might not discern,
Whichsoe'er the form she gazed on—him her Nala, him she thought.
She within her secret spirit—deeply pondering, stood and thought:
"How shall I the gods distinguish?—royal Nala how discern?".
Pondering thus Vidarbha's maiden—in the anguish of her heart,
Th' attributes of the immortals—sought, as heard of yore, to see.
"Th' attributes of each celestial—that our aged sires describe,
"As on earth they stand before me—not of one may I discern."
Long she pondered in her silence—and again, again she thought.
To the gods her only refuge—turned she at this trying hour.
With her voice and with her spirit—she her humble homage paid.
Folding both her hands and trembling—to the gods the maiden spake:
"As when heard the swan's sweet language—chose I then Nishadha's [king,
"By this truth I here adjure ye—oh, ye gods, reveal my lord;
"As in word or thought I swerve not—from my faith, all-knowing [powers,
"By this truth I here adjure ye—oh, ye gods, reveal my lord.
"As the gods themselves have destined—for my lord, Nishadha's king;
"By this truth I here adjure ye—oh, ye gods, my lord reveal.
"As my vow, so pledged to Nala—holily must be maintained,
"By this truth I here adjure ye—oh, ye gods, my lord reveal.
"Each the form divine assume ye—earth's protectors, mighty lords;
"So shall I discern my Nala—I shall know the king of men."
As they heard sad Damayanti—uttering thus her piteous prayer,
At her high resolve they wonder—steadfast truth and fervent love,
Holiness of soul and wisdom—to her lord her constant faith.

As she prayed, the gods obedient—stood with attributes revealed :
With unmoistened skins the Immortals—saw she, and with moveless
eyes ; [earth.
Fresh their dust-unsullied garlands,—hovered they, nor touched the
With his shadow, garland-drooping,—soiled with dust and moist with
sweat,
On the earth Nishadha's monarch—stood confessed, with twinkling
On the gods an instant gazed she—then upon the king of men ; [eyes ;
And of right king Bhima's daughter—named Nishadha's king her
Modestly the large-eyed maiden—lifted up his garment's hem, [lord.
Round his shoulders threw she lightly—the bright zone of radiant
flowers ;
So she chose him for her husband—Nala, that high-hearted maid.
Then, alas ! alas ! burst wildly,—from that conclave of the kings,
And "well done, well done," as loudly—from the gods and sages
All in their ecstatic wonder—glorified Nishadha's king. [broke ;
Then to royal Damayanti—Virasena's kingly son,
To that slender-waisted damsel—spake he comfort in his joy ; [gods,
"Since thou'st own'd me for thy husband—in the presence of the
"For thy faithful consort know me—aye delighting in thy words.
"While this spirit fills this body,—maiden with the smile serene !
"Thine am I, so long thine only,—this the solemn truth I vow."
Thus he gladdened Damayanti—with the assurance of his faith ;
And the happy pair devoutly—worshipped then the present gods.
Chosen thus Nishadha's monarch,—the bright guardians of the world,
In their gladness, all on Nala—eight transcendent gifts bestowed ;
To discern the visible godhead—in the sacrifice, a gait
Firm and noble, Sachi's husband,—Indra to king Nala gave.
Agni gave his own bright presence—whensoe'er the monarch called.
All the worlds instinct with splendour—through his power Hutasa
Subtle taste in food gave Yama—and in virtue eminence ; [gave.
Varun gave obedient water—to be present at his call ;
Garlands too of matchless fragrance ;—each his double blessing gave.

Thus bestowed their gracious favours—to the heavens the gods returned ;
And the rajas, who with wonder—Nala's marriage saw confirmed
With the gentle Damayanti—as they came, in joy returned.
Thus the kings of earth departed ;—Bhima in his joy and pride,
Solemnised the stately bridal—of the maiden and the king.
Fitting time when there he'd sojourned,—best of men, Nishadha's
Courteous parting with king Bhima,—to his native city went. [king ;
Having gained the pearl of women,—the majestic lord of earth
Lived in bliss, as with his Sachi—he that those old giants slew.
In his joy the elated monarch—shining radiant as the sun,
Ruled the subjects of his kingdom—with a just and equal sway.
Of the horse the famous offering,—like Nahucha's mighty son,
Every sacrifice performed he—with rich gifts to holy men.
And full oft in flowering gardens—and delicious shady groves,
Like a god, the royal Nala—took with Damayanti joy.
So begat from Damayanti—Nala, of heroic soul,
Indrasena, one fair daughter—Indrasen, one beauteous son.
Thus in sacrifice and pleasance—took his joy the king of men,
So the earth with riches teeming—ruled the sovereign of the earth.

BOOK VI.

Nala, chosen by Bhima's daughter,—the bright guardians of the world,
As they parted thence, with Kali—Dwapara approaching saw.
Kali as he saw, did Indra—did the giant-killer say,
"Here with Dwapara attended—whither, Kali, dost thou go?"
Kali spake, "The Swayembara—we of Damayanti seek ;
Her I go to make my consort,—into her mine heart hath passed."
"Closed and ended is that bridal,"—Indra answered with a smile,
"Nala she hath chosen for husband—in the presence of us all."
Thus addressed by Indra, Kali—in the transport of his wrath,

All the heavenly gods saluting,—thus his malediction spake : [choose,
"Since before the Immortals' presence—she a mortal spouse did
Of her impious crime most justly—heavy be the penal doom."
Kali hardly thus had spoken—than the heaven-born gods replied :
"With our full and liberal sanction—Damayanti chose her lord.
Who to Nala, with all virtue—rich endowed, would not incline ?
He that rightly knows each duty,—he who ever rightly acts,
He who reads the whole four Vedas,—the Puranas too the fifth,
In his palace with pure offerings—ever are the gods adored,
Gentle to all living creatures,—true in word and strict in vow ;
Good and constant he, and generous,—holy, temperate, patient, pure ;
His are all these virtues ever,—equal to the earth-guarding gods.
Thus endowed, the noble Nala,—he, O Kali, that would curse—
On himself recoil his curses,—only fatal to himself.
Nala, gifted with such virtues—he, O Kali, who would curse—
Be he plunged in hell's dark torments—in the deep and vasty lake."
Thus the gods to Kali speaking,—to their native heavens arose.
Soon as they had parted, Kali—thus to Dwapara began :
"I my wrath can curb no longer,—I henceforth in Nala dwell ;
From his kingdom will I cast him,—from his bliss with his sweet bride.
Thou within the dice embodied,—Dwapara, my cause assist."

BOOK VII.

BOUND by that malignant treaty—Kali with his dark ally,
Haunted they the stately palace—where Nishadha's monarch ruled ;
Watching still the fatal instant—in Nishadha long they dwelt.
Twelve long years had passed, ere Kali—saw that fatal instant come.
Nala after act uncleanly—the ablution half performed,
Prayed at eve, with feet unwashen,—Kali seized the fatal hour.
Into Nala straight he entered—and possessed his inmost soul.
Pushkara in haste he summoned,—"come with Nala play at dice,

Ever in the gainful hazard—by my subtle aid thou'lt win,
Even the kingdom of Nishadha,—even from Nala all his realm."
Pushkara by Kali summoned,—to his brother Nala came,
In the dice of dice embodied,—Dwapara stood silent by.
Pushkara the hero-slayer—to king Nala standing near:
"Play we with the dice, my brother,"—thus again, again he said.
Long the lofty-minded raja—that bold challenge might not brook,
In Vidarbha's princess' presence—deemed he now the time for play.
For his wealth, his golden treasures,—for his chariots, for his robes,
Then, possessed by Kali, Nala—in the game was worsted still.
He with love of gaming maddened,—of his faithful friends not one
Might arrest the desperate frenzy—of the conqueror of his foes.
Came the citizens assembling—with the councillors of state,
To behold the king approached they—to restrain his dread disease.
Then the charioteer advancing—thus to Damayanti spake:
"All the city, noble princess—stands assembled at the gate,
Say thou to Nishadha's monarch—'All his subjects here are met;
Ill they brook this dire misfortune—in their justice-loving king.'"
Then, her voice half choked with anguish—spake the sorrow-stricken queen,
Spirit-broken, Bhima's daughter—to Nishadha's sovereign spake,
"Raja, lo! the assembled city—at the gate their king to see:
With the councillors of wisdom—by their loyal duty led.
Deign thou, monarch, to admit them,"—thus again, again she said.
To the queen with beauteous eyelids—uttering thus her sad lament,
Still possessed by wicked Kali—answered not the king a word.
Then those councillors of wisdom—and those loyal citizens,
"'Tis not he," exclaimed in sorrow,—and in shame and grief went home.
Thus of Pushkara and Nala—still went on that fatal play;
Many a weary month it lasted,—and still lost the king of men.

BOOK VIII.

DAMAYANTI then beholding—Punyasloka, king of men,
Undistracted, him distracted—with the maddening love of play.
In her dread and in her sorrow—thus did Bhima's daughter speak;
Pondering on the weighty business—that concerned the king of men.
Trembling at his guilty frenzy—yet to please him still intent.
Nala, 'reft of all his treasures—when the noble woman saw,
Thus addressed she Vrihatsena,—her old faithful slave and nurse,
Friendly, in all business dextrous,—most devoted, wise in speech:
"Vrihatsena, go, the council,—as at Nala's call, convene,
Say what he hath lost of treasure—and what treasure yet remains."
Then did all that reverend council—Nala's summons as they heard,
"Our own fate is now in peril"—speaking thus, approach the king.
And a second time his subjects—all assembling, crowded near, [heed.
And the queen announced their presence;—of her words he took no
All her words thus disregarded—when king Bhima's daughter found,
To the palace, Damayanti—to conceal her shame returned.
When the dice she heard for ever—adverse to the king of men,
And of all bereft, her Nala—to the nurse again she spake:
"Go again, my Vrihatsena,—in the name of Nala, go,
To the charioteer, Varshneya,—great the deed must now be done."
Vrihatsena on the instant—Damayanti's words she heard,
Caused the charioteer be summoned—by her messengers of trust.
Bhima's daughter to Varshneya,—winning, with her gentle voice,
Spake, the time, the place well choosing—for the deed, nor spake in vain: [placed,
"Well thou know'st the full reliance—that in thee the king hath
In his fatal hour of peril—wilt not thou stand forth to aid?
As by Pushkara is worsted—ever more and more the king,
More and more the fatal frenzy—maddens in his heart for play.
As to Pushkara obedient—ever fall the lucky dice,

Thus those dice to royal Nala—still with adverse fortune fall.
Nor the voice of friend or kindred—as beseems him, will he hear;
Even to me he will not listen—in the madness of his heart.
Of the lofty-minded Nala—well I know 'tis not the sin,
That my words this senseless monarch—in his frenzy will not hear.
Charioteer, to thee my refuge—come I, do thou my behest!
I am not o'er calm in spirit,—haply he may perish thus. [they,
Yoke the much-loved steeds of Nala,—fleet of foot, as thought, are
In the chariot place our children,—to Cundina's city go. [steeds;
Leave the children with my kindred—and the chariot and the
Then or dwell there at thy pleasure,—or depart where'er thou wilt."
When the speech of Damayanti—heard king Nala's charioteer,
He, the chief of Nala's council—thus in full divan addressed,
Weighed within their solemn conclave,—and their full assent obtained,
With the children in the chariot—to Vidarbha straight he drove.
There he rendered up the horses,—with the chariot there he left
That young maiden Indrasena—Indrasen, that noble boy.
To king Bhima paid his homage,—sad, for Nala's fall distressed,
Thence departing, to Ayodhya—took the charioteer his way.
In his grief to Rituparna—that illustrious king, he came,
As his charioteer, the service—entered of the lord of earth.

BOOK IX.

Scarce Varshneya had departed,—still the king of men played on,
Till to Pushkara his kingdom,—all that he possessed, was lost.
Nala then, despoiled of kingdom,—smiling Pushkara bespake:
"Throw we yet another hazard,—Nala, where is now thy stake?
There remains but Damayanti,—all thou hast beside, is mine.
Throw we now for Damayanti,—come, once more the hazard try."
Thus as Pushkara addressed him,—Punyasloka's inmost heart
By his grief was rent asunder,—not a single word he spake.
And on Pushkara, king Nala—in his silent anguish gazed.

All his ornaments of splendour—from his person stripped he off,
With a single vest, scarce covered,—'mid the sorrow of his friends,
Slowly wandered forth the monarch,—fallen from such a height of
Damayanti with one garment—slowly followed him behind. [bliss.
Three long nights Nishadha's monarch—there without the gates had
Proclamation through the city—then did Pushkara bid make, [dwelt.
"Whosoe'er befriendeth Nala,—shall to instant death be doomed."
Thus, as Pushkara gave order—in the terror of his power,
Might the citizens no longer—hospitably serve the king.
Near the walls, of kind reception—worthiest, but by none received;
Three nights longer staid the monarch,—water was his only drink,
He in unfastidious hunger—plucked the fruits, the roots of earth.
Then went forth again the outcast:—Damayanti followed slow.
In the agony of famine—Nala, after many days,
Saw some birds around him settling—with their golden tinctured wings.
Then the monarch of Nishadha—thought within his secret heart,
These to-day my welcome banquet,—and my treasure these will be.
Over them his single garment—spreading light, he wrapped them round:
Up that single garment bearing—to the air they sprang away;
And the birds above him hovering—thus in human accents spake,
Naked as they saw him standing—on the earth, and sad, and lone:—
"Lo, we are the dice, to spoil thee—thus descended, foolish king!
While thou hadst a single garment—all our joy was incomplete."
When the dice he saw departing—and himself without his robe,
Mournfully did Punyasloka—thus to Damayanti speak:
"They, O blameless, by whose anger—from my kingdom I am driven,
Life-sustaining food unable—in my misery to find— [cast king—
They, through whom Nishadha's people—may not house their out-
They, the forms of birds assuming—my one robe have borne away.
In the dark extreme of misery—sad and frantic as I am,
Hear me, princess, hear and profit—by thy husband's best advice.
Hence are many roads diverging—to the region of the south,
Passing by Avanti's city—and the height of Rishavàn; [stream;
Vindhya here, the mighty mountain,—and Payoshni's seaward

And the lone retreats of hermits—on the fruits of earth that live ;
This will lead thee to Vidarbha,—this to Cosala away,
Far beyond the region stretches—southward to the southward
In these words to Damayanti—did the royal Nala speak, [clime."
More than once to Bhima's daughter—anxious pointing out the way.
She, with voice half choked with sorrow,—with her weight of woe
oppressed,
These sad words did Damayanti—to Nishadha's monarch speak :—
" My afflicted heart is breaking,—and my sinking members fail,
When, O king, thy desperate counsel—once I think of, once again.
Robbed of kingdom, robbed of riches,—naked, thirst and hunger worn ;
How shall I depart and leave thee—in the wood by man untrod.
When thou, sad and famine-stricken,—thinkest of thy former bliss,
In the wild wood, oh, my husband,—I thy weariness will soothe.
Like a wife, in every sorrow,—this the wise physicians own,
Healing herb is none or balsam,—Nala, 'tis the truth I speak."

NALA *spake.*

Slender-waisted Damayanti !—true, indeed, is all thou'st said ;
Like a wife no friendly medicine—to afflicted man is given.
Fear not that I thee abandon,—wherefore, timid, dread'st thou this ?
Oh, myself might I abandon,—and not thee, thou unreproached.

DAMAYANTI *spake.*

If indeed, oh mighty monarch !—thou wilt ne'er abandon me,
Wherefore then towards Vidarbha—dost thou point me out the way.
Well, I know thee, noble Nala,—to desert me far too true,
Only with a soul distracted—would'st thou leave me, lord of earth.
Yet, again, the way thou pointest,—yet, again, thou best of men,
Thus my sorrow still enhancing,—oh, thou like the immortal gods ;
If this be thy better counsel,—" to her kindred let her go,"
Be it so, and both together—to Vidarbha set we forth.
Thee Vidarbha's king will honour,—honour'd in his turn by thee ;
Held in high respect and happy—in our mansion thou shalt dwell.

BOOK X.

NALA *spake.*

"MIGHTY is thy father's kingdom—once was mine as mighty too;
Never will I there seek refuge—in my base extremity.
There I once appeared in glory—to the exalting of thy pride;
Shall I now appear in misery—to the increasing of thy shame?"
Nala thus to Damayanti—spake again, and yet again,
Comforting the noble lady,—scant in half a garment clad.
Both together by one garment—covered, roamed they here and there;
Wearied out by thirst and famine—to a cabin drew they near.
When they reached that lowly cabin—then did great Nishadha's king,
With the princess of Vidarbha,—on the hard earth seat them down;
Naked, with no mat to rest on,—wet with mire and stained with dust.
Weary then with Damayanti—on the earth he fell asleep.
Sank the lovely Damayanti—by his side with sleep opprest,
She thus plunged in sudden misery,—she the tender, the devout.
But while on the cold earth slumbered—Damayanti, all distraught
Nala in his mind by sorrow—might no longer calmly sleep;
For the losing of his kingdom,—the desertion of his friends,
And his weary forest wanderings—painful on his thought arose;
"If I do it, what may follow?—what if I refuse to do?
Were my instant death the better—or to abandon her I love.
But to me too deep devoted—suffers she distress and shame;
Reft of me she home may wander—to her royal father's house;
Faithful wandering ever with me—certain sorrow will she bear,
But if separated from me—chance of solace may be hers."
Long within his heart he pondered—and again, again weighed o'er.
Best he thought it Damayanti—to desert, that wretched king.
From her virtue none dare harm her—in the lonely forest way,
Her the fortunate, the noble,—my devoted wedded wife.
Thus his mind on Damayanti—dwelt in its perverted thought,

Wrought by Kali's evil influence—to desert his lovely wife.
Of himself without a garment,—and of her with only one
As he thought, approached he near her—to divide that single robe.
"How shall I divide the garment—by my loved one unperceived?"
Pondering this within his spirit—round the cabin Nala went;
In that narrow cabin's circuit—Nala wandered here and there,
Till he found without a scabbard—shining a well-tempered sword.
Then when half that only garment—he had severed, and put on,
In her sleep Vidarbha's princess—with bewildered mind he fled.
Yet, his cruel heart relenting—to the cabin turns he back;
On the slumbering Damayanti—gazing, sadly wept the king;
"Thou, that sun nor wind hath ever—roughly visited, my love!
On the hard earth in a cabin—sleepest with thy guardian gone.
Thus attired in half a garment,—she that aye so sweetly smiled,
Like to one distracted, beauteous,—how at length will she awake?
How will 't fare with Bhima's daughter,—lone, abandoned by her lord,
Wandering in the savage forest—where wild beasts and serpents dwell?
May the suns and winds of heaven,—may the genii of the woods,
Noblest, may they all protect thee,—thine own virtue thy best guard."
To his wife of peerless beauty—on the earth, 'twas thus he spoke.
Then of sense bereft by Kali,—Nala hastily set forth;
And departing, still departing,—he returned again, again;
Dragged away by that bad demon,—ever by his love drawn back.
Nala, thus his heart divided—into two conflicting parts,
Like a swing goes backward, forward—from the cabin to and fro.
Torn away at length by Kali—flies afar the frantic king,
Leaving there his wife in slumber,—making miserable moans.
Reft of sense, possessed by Kali,—thinking still on her he left,
Passed he in the lonely forest,—leaving his deserted wife.

BOOK XI.

SCARCELY had king Nala parted,—Damayanti now refreshed,
Wakened up, the slender-waisted,—timorous, in the desert wood.
When she did not see her husband,—overpowered with grief and pain,
Loud she shriek'd in her first anguish—"Where art thou, Nishadha's king?
Mighty king! my soul-protector,—O, my lord! desert'st thou me.
Oh, I'm lost! undone for ever,—helpless in the wild wood left;
Faithful once to every duty—wert thou not, and true in word?
Art thou faithful to thy promise—to desert me thus in sleep?
Could'st thou then depart, forsaking—thy devoted constant wife;
Her in sooth that never wronged thee,—wronged indeed, but not by her?
Keep'st thou thus thy solemn promise,—oh, unfaithful lord of men,
There, when all the gods were present,—plighted to thy wedded wife?
Death is but decreed to mortals—at its own appointed time,
Hence one moment, thus deserted—one brief moment do I live.—
But thou'st had thy sport—enough then,—now desist, O king of men,
Mock not thou a trembling woman,—show thee to me, O my lord!
Yes, I see thee, there I see thee—hidden as thou think'st from sight,
In the rushes why conceal thee?—answer me, why speak'st thou not.
Wherefore now ungentle stay'st thou,—like to one forsworn, aloof?
Wherefore wilt thou not approach me—to console me in my woe?
For myself I will not sorrow,—nor for aught to me befals.
Thou art all alone, my husband,—I will only mourn for thee.
How will 't fare with thee, my Nala,—thirsting, famished, faint with toil.
Nor beholding me await thee—underneath the trees at eve."
Then, in all her depth of anguish—with her trouble as on fire,
Hither, thither, went she weeping,—all around she went and wailed.
Now springs up the desolate princess,—now falls down in prostrate grief;
Now she pines in silent sorrow,—now she shrieks and wails aloud.
So consumed with inward misery,—ever sighing more and more,

Spake at length king Bhima's daughter,—spake the still devoted wife:
" He, by whose dire imprecation—Nala this dread suffering bears,
May he far surpass in suffering,—all that Nala suffers now.
May the evil one, to evil—who the blameless Nala drives,
Smitten by a curse as fatal,—live a dark unblessed life."
Thus her absent lord lamenting,—that high-minded raja's queen,
Every where her lord went seeking—in the satyr-haunted wood.
Like a maniac, Bhima's daughter—wandered wailing here and there;
And " alas! alas! my husband,"—every where her cry was heard.
Her beyond all measure wailing,—like the osprey screaming shrill,
Miserably still deploring,—still renewing her lament.
Suddenly king Bhima's daughter,—as she wandered near his lair,
Seized a huge gigantic serpent—in his raging famine fierce.
In the grasp of that fierce serpent—round about with terror girt,
Not herself she pities only,—pities she Nishadha's king.
" O my guardian, thus unguarded,—in this savage forest seized,
Seized by this terrific serpent,—wherefore art not thou at hand?
How will't be, when thou rememberest,—once again thy faithful wife,
From this dreadful curse delivered,—mind, and sense, and wealth returned? [with fatigue,
When thou'rt weary, when thou'rt hungry,—when thou'rt fainting
Who will soothe, O blameless Nala—all thy weariness, thy woe."
Then a huntsman as he wandered—in the forest jungle thick,
As he heard her thus bewailing,—in his utmost haste drew near.
In the grasp when he beheld her—of that long-eyed serpent fell,
Instant did the nimble huntsman,—rapidly as he came on,
Pierce that unresisting serpent—with a sharp and mortal shaft:
In her sight he slew that serpent,—skill'd in slaughter of the chase.
Her released he from her peril—washed he then with water pure,
And with sylvan food refreshed her,—and with soothing words address'd:
" Who art thou that roam'st the forest—with the eyes of the gazelle;
How to this extreme of misery,—noble lady, hast thou fallen?"
Damayanti, by the huntsman—thus in soothing tone addressed,

All the story of her misery—told him, as it all befel. [breast,
Her, scant-clothed in half a garment,—with soft swelling limbs and
Form of youthful faultless beauty—and her fair and moonlike face,
And her eyes with brows dark arching,—and her softly-melting speech,
Saw long time that wild-beast hunter,—kindled all his heart with love.
Then with winning voice that huntsman—bland beginning his discourse,
Fain with amorous speech would soothe her—she, his dark intent
perceived.
Damayanti, chaste and faithful,—soon as she his meaning knew,
In the transport of her anger—her indignant soul took fire.
In his wicked thought the dastard—her yet powerless to subdue,
On the unsubdued stood gazing,—as like some bright flame she shone.
Damayanti, in her sorrow—of her realm, her lord bereft,
On the instant she found language—uttered loud her curse of wrath,
"As my pure and constant spirit—swerves not from Nishadha's lord,
Instant so may this base hunter—lifeless fall upon the earth."
Scarce that single word was uttered,—suddenly that hunter bold
Down upon the earth fell lifeless,—like a lightning blasted tree.

BOOK XII.

Slain that savage wild-beast hunter,—onward went the lotus-eyed,
Through the dread, and desert forest—ringing with the cricket's song;
Full of lions, pards, and tigers,—stags, and buffalos, and bears,
Where all kinds of birds were flocking,—and wild men and robbers
Trees of every form and stature,—every foliage, every name; [dwelt.
Pregnant with rich mines of metal,—many a mountain it enclosed,
Many a shady resonant arbour,—many a deep and wondrous glen;
Many a lake, and pool, and river,—birds and beasts of every shape.
She, in forms terrific round her—serpents, elves, and giants saw:
Pools, and tanks of lucid water,—and the shaggy tops of hills,
Flowing streams and headlong torrents—saw, and wondered at the sigh.

And the princess of Vidarbha—gazed where in their countless herds,
Buffalos and bears were feeding,—boars, and serpents of the wood.
Safe in virtue, bright in beauty,—glorious and of high resolve,
Now alone, Vidarbha's daughter—wandering, her lost Nala sought.
Yet no fear king Bhima's daughter—for herself might deign to feel,
Travelling the dreary forest,—only for her lord distressed ; [wailed,
Him she mourned, that noble princess,—him in bitterest anguish
Every limb with sorrow trembling—stood she on a beetling rock ;
" Monarch, with broad chest capacious,—monarch with the sinewy
Me in this dread forest leaving—whither hast thou fled away ? [arm,
Thou the holy Aswamedha,—thou each sacrificial rite,
Hast performed, to me, me only,—in thy holy faith thou'st failed.
That which thou, O best of husbands,—in mine hearing hast declared,
Thy most solemn vow remember,—call to mind thy plighted faith.
Of the swift-winged swans the language,—uttered, monarch, by thy side,
That thyself, before my presence—didst renew, bethink thee well.
Thou the Vedas, thou the Angas,—with the Upangas oft hast read,
Of each heaven-descended volume—one and simple is the truth.
Therefore, of thy foes the slayer !—reverence thou the sacred truth
Of thy solemn plighted promise—in my presence sworn so oft.
Am not I the loved so dearly,—purely, sinlessly beloved ;
In this dark and awful forest—wherefore dost thou not reply ? [form,
Here with monstrous jaws wide yawning,—with his fierce and horrid
Gapes the forest king to slay me,—and thou art not here to save.
None but I, thou'st said, for ever,—none but I to thee am dear !
Make this oft-repeated language,—make this oft-sworn promise true.
To thy queen bereft of reason,—to thy weeping wife beloved,
Why repliest thou not, her only—thou desir'st—she only thee.
Meagre, miserable, pallid,—tainted with the dust and mire,
Scantly clad in half a garment,—lone, with no protector near ;
Like a large-eyed hind, that wanders—separate from the wonted herd,
Thou regard'st me not, thus weeping,—oh thou tamer of thy foes.
Mighty king, a lonely wanderer—in this vast and trackless wood,

Damayanti, I, address thee,—wherefore answerest not my voice ?
Nobly born, and nobly minded,—beautiful in every limb,
Do I not e'en now behold thee—in this mountain, first of men,
In this lion-haunted forest,—in this tiger-howling wood,
Lying down or seated, standing,—or in majesty and might
Moving, do I not behold thee—the enhancer of my woe ?
Who shall I address, afflicted,—wasted by my grief away ;
'Hast thou haply seen my Nala—in the solitary wood ?'
Who this day will show the monarch,—wandering in the forest depth,
Beautiful and royal-minded,—conqueror of a host of foes !
'Him thou seek'st with eyes of lotus,—Nala, sovereign of men—
Lo, he's here!' whose voice of music—may I hear thus sweetly speak ?
Lo, with fourfold tusks before me,—and with wide and gaping jaws,
Stands the forest king, the tiger—I approach him without fear.
'Of the beasts art thou the monarch—all this forest thy domain,
For the daughter of Vidarbha—Damayanti, know thou me,
Consort of Nishadha's sovereign—Nala, slayer of his foes—
Seeking here my exile husband,—lonely, wretched, sorrow-driven,
Thou, O king of beasts, console me,—if my Nala thou hast seen ;
Or, O lord of all the forest,—Nala if thou canst not show,
Best of savage beasts, devour me—from my misery set me free.'
Hearing thus my lamentation—now does that fell king of beasts
Go towards the crystal river—flowing downward to the sea.—
To this Mountain then the holy,—crowned with many a lofty peak,
In its soul-exalting splendour—rising, many-hued, to heaven ;
Full within of precious metal,—rich with many a glowing gem,
Rising o'er the spreading forest,—like a banner broad and high,
Ranged by elephants and lions,—tigers, bears, and boars, and stags ;
And of many birds the voices—sweetly sound o'er all its cliffs ;
All the trees of richest foliage,—all the trees of stateliest height,
All the flowers and golden fruitage—on its crested summits wave,
Down its peaks in many a streamlet—dip the water-birds their wings ;
This, the monarch of all mountains,—ask I of the king of men ;

'O, all-honoured Prince of Mountains,—with thy heavenward soaring
Refuge of the lost, most noble,—thee, O Mountain, I salute; [peaks,
I salute thee, lowly bowing,—I, the daughter of a king;
Of a king the royal consort,—of a king's son I the bride.
Of Vidarbha the great sovereign,—mighty hero is my sire,
Named the lord of earth, king Bhima,—of each caste the guardian he;
Of the holy Aswamedha—of the regal sacrifice,
He the offerer, best of monarchs,—known by his commanding eye,
Pious, and of life unblemished,—true in word, of generous speech,
Affable, courageous, prosperous,—skilled in every duty, pure,
Of Vidarbha the protector,—conqueror of a host of foes;
Know me of that king the daughter,—lowly thus approaching thee.
In Nishadha, mighty Mountain!—dwelt the father of my lord,
High the name he won, the illustrious,—Virasena was he called.
Of this king the son, the hero,—prosperous and truly brave,
He who rules his father's kingdom—by hereditary right,
Slayer of his foes, dark Nala,—Punyasloka is he called;
Holy, Veda-read, and eloquent,—soma quaffing, fire adoring,
Sacrificer, liberal giver,—warrior, in all points a king,— [stands,
Of this monarch, best of mountains,—know, the wife, before thee
Fallen from bliss, bereft of husband,—unprotected, sorrow-doomed,
Seeking everywhere her husband,—him the best of noblest men.
Best of mountains, heaven-upsoaring—with thy hundred stately peaks,
Hast thou seen the kingly Nala—in this dark and awful wood:
Like the elephant in courage,—wise, impetuous, with long arms,
Valiant, and of truth unquestioned,—my heroic, glorious lord;
Hast thou seen Nishadha's sovereign,—mighty Nala hast thou seen?
Why repliest thou not, oh Mountain,—sorrowing, lonely, and distressed,
With thy voice why not console me,—as thine own afflicted child?'

"Hero, mighty, strong in duty,—true of promise, lord of earth,
If thou art within the forest,—show thee in thy proper form.
When so eloquently deep-toned,—like the sound of some dark cloud,
Shall I hear thy voice, oh Nala!—sweet as the amrita draught,

Saying, 'daughter of Vidarbha!'—with distinct, with blessed sound,
Musical as holy Veda,—rich, and soothing all my pain;
Thus console me, trembling, fainting,—thou, oh virtue-loving king!"
To the holiest of mountains—spake the daughter of the king.
Damayanti then set forward—toward the region of the north.
Three days long, three nights she wandered,—then that noble woman saw
The unrivalled wood of hermits,—like to a celestial grove.
To the ancient famous hermits—equal was that sacred crew;
Self-denying, strict in diet,—temperate, and undefiled;
Water-drinking, air inhaling,—and the leaves their simple food;
Mortified, for ever blessed,—seeking the right way to heaven;
Bark for vests and skins for raiment—wore those hermits, sense-subdued.
She beheld the pleasant circle—of those hermits' lonely cells;
Round them flocks of beasts were grazing,—wantoned there the monkey tribes.
When she saw those holy dwellings—all her courage was revived.
Lovely browed, and lovely tressed,—lovely bosom'd, lovely lipp'd,
In her brightness, in her glory,—with her large dark beauteous eyes,
Entered she those hermit dwellings,—wife of Virasena's son;
Pearl of women, ever blessed,—Damayanti the devout,
She those holy men saluting—stood with modest form half bent.
"Hail, and welcome!" thus those hermits—instant with one voice exclaimed.
And those sacred men no sooner—had the fitting homage paid,
"Take thy seat," they said, "oh Lady,—and command what we must do."
Thus replied the slender waisted,—"Blessed are ye, holy men.
In your sacred fires, your worship—blameless, with your beasts and birds.
Doth the grace of heaven attend you—in your duties, in your deeds!"
Answered they, "The grace of heaven—ever blesses all our deeds.
But say thou, of form so beauteous,—who thou art, and what thou would'st?
As thy noble form we gaze on,—on thy brightness as we gaze,
In amaze we stand and wonder,—cheer thee up, and mourn no more.
Of the wood art thou the goddess,—or the mountain goddess thou;

Or the goddess of the river?—Blessed Spirit, speak the truth."
"Nor the sylvan goddess am I,"—to the Wise she thus replied;
Neither of the mountain, Brahmins,—nor the river nymph am I.
Know me but a mortal being,—O, ye rich in holiness!
All my tale at length I'll tell ye—if meet audience ye will give.
In Vidarbha, mighty guardian,—Bhima, dwells the lord of earth;
Of that noble king the daughter,—twice-born Sages, know ye me.
And the monarch of Nishadha—Nala named, the great in fame;
Brave in battle, conqueror, prudent,—is my lord, the peasants' king;
To the gods devout in worship,—friendly to the Brahmin race,
Of Nishadha's race the guardian,—great in glory, great in might,
True in word, and skilled in duty,—and the slayer of his foes.
Pious, heaven-devoted, prosperous,—conqueror of hostile towns;
Nala named, the best of sovereigns,—splendid as the king of gods.
Know that large-eyed chief my husband,—like the full-orbed moon his face,
Giver he of costly offerings,—deep in th' holy volumes read;
Slayer of his foes in battle,—glorious as the sun and moon.
He to some most evil minded,—unrespected, wicked men,
After many a challenge, studious—he of virtue and of truth,
To these skilful gamesters, fraudful,—lost his kingdom and his wealth,
Know ye me the hapless consort—of that noble king of kings,
Damayanti, so they name me,—yearning for my husband's sight.
I through forests, over mountains,—stagnant marsh and river broad,
Lake with wide pellucid surface,—through the long and trackless wood,
Ever seeking for my husband,—Nala, skilful in the fight.
Mighty in the use of weapons,—wander desolate and sad.
Tell me to this pleasant sojourn,—sacred to these holy men,
Hath he come, the royal Nala?—hath Nishadha's monarch come?
For whose sake through ways all trackless,—terrible, have I set forth,
In this drear, appalling forest—where the lynx and tiger range,
If I see not noble Nala,—ere few days, few nights are o'er,
I to happiness will join me,—from this mortal frame set free.
Reft of him, my princely husband,—what have I to do with life—
How endure existence longer—for my husband thus distressed."

To the lady thus complaining,—lonely in the savage wood,
Answered thus those holy hermits,—spake the gifted seers the truth :—
"There will be a time hereafter,—beautiful, the time will come,
Through devotion now we see him,—and thou too wilt see him soon ;
That good monarch of Nishadha,—Nala, slayer of his foes ;
That dispenser of strict justice,—Bhima's daughter! free from grief,
From all sin released, thou'lt see him,—glittering in his royal gems,
Governing that noble city,—o'er his enemies supreme.
To his foemen causing terror,—to his friends allaying grief,
Thou, oh noble, shalt thy husband—see, that king of noble race."
To the much-loved wife of Nala,—to the princess speaking thus,
Vanished then those holy hermits—with their sacred fires, their cells.
As she gazed upon the wonder,—wrapt in mute amaze she stood ;
Damayanti, fair-limbed princess,—wife of Virasena's son ;
"Have I only seen a vision?—what hath been this wondrous chance?
Where are all those holy hermits?—where the circle of their cells?
Where that pure and pleasant river,—haunted by the dipping birds?
Where those trees with grateful umbrage,—with their pendent fruits
and flowers?"
Long within her heart she pondered,—Damayanti with sweet smile,
For her lord to grief abandoned,—miserable, pale of hue ;
To another region passed she,—there with voice by weeping choked,
Mourns she, till with eyes o'erflowing—an Asoca tree she saw.
Best of trees, the Asoca blooming—in the forest she approached,
Gemmed all o'er with glowing fruitage,—vocal with the songs of birds.
"Ah, behold amid the forest—flourishes this happy tree,
With its leafy garments radiant,—as the joyous mountain king.
O thou tree with pleasant aspect,—from my sorrow set me free.
Vitasoca, hast thou seen him,—hast the fearless raja seen,
Nala, of his foes the slayer,—Damayanti's lord beloved?
Hast thou seen Nishadha's monarch,—hast thou seen mine only love,
Clad in half a single garment—with his soft and delicate skin ;
Hast thou seen th' afflicted hero,—wandering in the forest lone?
That I may depart ungrieving,—fair Asoca, answer me.

Truly be thou named Asoca,—as the extinguisher of grief."
Thus in her o'erpowering anguish—moved she round the Asoca tree.
Then she went her way in sadness,—to another region dread.
Many a tree she stood and gazed on,—many a river passed she o'er;
Passed she many a pleasant mountain,—many a wild deer, many a bird;
Many a hill and many a cavern,—many a bright and wondrous stream,
Saw king Bhima's wandering daughter,—as she sought her husband lost.

Long she roamed her weary journey,—Damayanti with sweet smile,
Lo, a caravan of merchants,—elephants, and steeds, and cars,
And beyond, a pleasant river—with its waters cool and clear.
'Twas a quiet stream and waveless,—girt about with spreading canes;
There the cuckoo, there the osprey,—there the red geese clamouring stood;
Swarmed the turtles, fish and serpents,—there rose many a stately isle.

When she saw that numerous concourse,—Nala's once all-glorious wife,
Entered she, the slender-waisted—in the midst of all the host; [cried;
Maniac-like in form and feature,—and in half a garment clad,
Thin and pallid, travel-tainted,—matted all her locks with dust.
As they all beheld her standing,—some in terror fled away;
Some stood still in speechless wonder,—others raised their voice and
Mocked her some with cruel tauntings,—others spake reproachful words;
Others looked on her with pity,—and inquired her state, her name.
"Who art thou? whose daughter, Lady!—in the forest seek'st thou aught?
At thy sight we stand confounded,—art thou of our mortal race?
Of this wood art thou the goddess?—of this mountain? of that plain?
Who art thou, O noble Lady!—thee, our refuge, we adore.
Art thou sylvan nymph or genius,—or celestial nymph divine?
Every way regard our welfare,—and protect us, undespised:
So our caravan in safety—may pursue its onward way,
So ordain it, O illustrious!—that good fortune wait on all."
Thus addressed by that assemblage,—Damayanti, kingly-born,
Answered thus with gentle language,—grieving for her husband lost.
Of that caravan the leader,—and the whole assembled host,

Youths and boys, and grey-haired elders,—and the guides, thus answered she :

" Know me, like yourselves, a mortal,—daughter of a king of men,
Of another king the consort,—seeking for my royal lord ;
Know Vidarbha's king my father,—and Nishadha's king my lord,
Nala is his name, the glorious,—him, th' unconquered, do I seek ;
Know ye aught of that good monarch,—tell me, quick, of my beloved,
Of the tiger hero, Nala,—slayer of a host of foes."

Of the caravan the captain—thus the lovely-limbed addressed,
Suchi was his name, the merchant,—" Hear, illustrious queen, my
" Of this caravan the captain—I, O Lady with sweet smile, [speech ;
Him that bears the name of Nala—nowhere have these eyes beheld.
Elephants, and pards, and tigers,—lynxes, buffaloes, and bears,
See I in this trackless forest—uninhabited by men ;
Save thyself, of human feature—nought, or human form, I've seen.
So may he, the king of Yakshas,—Manibhadra, guard us well."
To the merchants then she answered—to the leader of the host,
" Tell me whither do ye travel ?—whither bound your caravan ? "

The CAPTAIN *of the caravan spake.*

" To the realm of Chedi's sovereign,—truth-discerning Subahu,
Soon this caravan will enter,—travelling in search of gain."

BOOK XIII.

THIS the lovely princess hearing—from the captain of the band
With the caravan set forward,—seeking still her royal lord. [glens ;
Long their journey through the forest,—through the dark and awful
Then a lake of loveliest beauty,—fragrant with the lotus flowers, [trees ;
Saw those merchants, wide and pleasant—with fresh grass and shady
Flowers and fruits bedecked its borders,—where the birds melodious
In its clear delicious waters,—soul-enchanting, icy cool, [sang :
With their horses all o'erwearied—thought they then to plunge and
At the signal of the captain—entered all that pleasant grove. [bathe ;
At the close of day arriving—there encamped they for the night.

When the midnight came, all noiseless,—came in silence deep and
Weary slept the band of merchants,—lo, a herd of elephants, [still,
Oozing moisture from their temples,—came to drink the troubled
stream. [rest,
When that caravan they gazed on,—with their slumbering beasts at
The tame elephants they scented,—those wild forest elephants;
Forward rush they fleet and furious,—mad to slay, and wild with heat;
Irresistible the onset—of the rushing ponderous beasts, [roll;
As the peaks from some high mountain—down the valley thundering
Strewn was all the way before them—with the boughs, the trunks of
trees;
On they crash'd to where the travellers—slumbered by the lotus lake.
Trampled down without a struggle,—helpless on the earth they lay,
"Woe, oh, woe!" shrieked out the merchants,—wildly, some began to
fly, [sleep;
In the forest thickets plunging;—some stood gasping, blind with
And the elephants down beat them—with their tusks, their trunks,
their feet.
Many saw their camels dying,—mingled with the men on foot,
And in frantic tumult rushing—wildly struck each other down;
Many miserably shrieking—cast them down upon the earth,
Many climbed the trees in terror,—on the rough ground stumbled some.
Thus in various wise and fatal—by the elephants assailed,
Lay that caravan so wealthy,—scattered all abroad or slain.
Such, so fearful was the tumult,—the three worlds seemed all appalled,
"'Tis a fire amid the encampment,—save ye, fly ye, for your lives.
Lo, your precious pearls ye trample,—take them up, why fly so fast?
Save them, 'tis a common venture,—fear ye not that I deceive."
Thus t' each other shrieked the merchants,—as in fear they scattered
round.
"Yet again I call upon you,—cowards! think ye what ye do."
All around this frantic carnage—raging through the prostrate host,
Damayanti soon awakened—with her heart all full of dread;
There she saw a hideous slaughter—the whole world might well appal.

To such sights all unfamiliar—gazed the queen with lotus eyes,
Pressing in her breath with terror,—slowly rose she on her feet.
And the few that scaped the carnage,—few that scaped without a wound,
All at once exclaimed together—" Of whose deeds is this the doom ?
Hath not mighty Manibhadra—adoration meet received.
And Vaisravana the holy,—of the Yakshas lord and king,
Have not all that might impede us,—ere we journeyed, been addressed ?
Was it doomed, that all good omens—by this chance should be belied ?
Were no planets haply adverse ?—how hath fate, like this, befall'n !"

Others answered in their misery,—reft of kindred and of wealth,
" Who is that ill-omened woman,—that with maniac-staring eyes,
Joined our host, mis-shaped in aspect,—and with scarcely human form?
Surely all this wicked witchcraft—by her evil power is wrought ;
Witch or sorceress she, or dæmon,—fatal cause of all our fears,
Hers is all the guilt, the misery,—who such damning proof may doubt ?
Could we but behold that false one,—murtheress, bane of all our host,
With the clods, the dust, the bamboos,—with our staves, or with our hands,
We would slay her on the instant,—of our caravan the fate."
But no sooner Damayanti—their appalling words had heard,
In her shame and in her terror—to the forest shade she fled.
And that guilt imputed dreading,—thus her fate began to wail :
" Woe is me, still o'er me hovers—the terrific wrath of fate ;
No good fortune e'er attends me,—of what guilt is this the doom ?
Not a sin can I remember,—not the least to living man.
Or in deed, or thought, or language,—of what guilt is this the doom ?
In some former life committed,—expiate I now the sin.
To this infinite misfortune—hence by penal justice doomed ?
Lost my husband, lost my kingdom,—from my kindred separate ;
Separate from noble Nala,—from my children far away,
Widowed of my rightful guardian—in the serpent-haunted wood."

Of that caravan at morning—then the sad surviving few,
Setting forth from that dread region,—o'er that hideous carnage grieve ;
Each a brother mourns, or father,—or a son, or dearest friend,

Still Vidarbha's princess uttered,—"What the sin that I have done!
Scarcely in this desert forest—had I met this host of men,
By the elephants they perish,—this is through my luckless fate;
A still lengthening life of sorrow—I henceforth must sadly lead.
Ere his destined day none dieth,—this of aged seers the lore;
Therefore am not I too trampled—by this herd of furious beasts.
Every deed of living mortal—by over-ruling fate is done.
Yet no sin have I committed—in my blameless infancy,
To deserve this dire disaster,—or in word, or deed, or thought.
For the choosing of my husband—are the guardians of the world,
Angry are the gods, rejected—for the noble Nala's sake?
From my lord this long divorcement—through their power do I endure."
Thus the noblest of all women—to bewail her fate began,
The deserted Damayanti—with these sad and bitter words;
With some Veda-reading Brahmins,—who survived that scattered host,
Then she went her way in sadness,—like the young moon's sickle pale.
And ere long a mighty city—that afflicted queen drew near:
'Twas the king of Chedi's city,—truth-discerning Subahu.
Scantly clad in half a garment—entered she that stately town;
Her disturbed, emaciate, wretched,—with dishevelled hair, unwashed,
Like a maniac, onward-moving,—saw that city's wondering throng;
Gazing on her as she entered—to the monarch's royal seat;
All the boys her footsteps followed—in their curious gamesome play;
Circled round by these, she wandered—near the royal palace gate.
From that palace lofty terrace—her the mother of the king
Saw, and thus her nurse addressed she,—"Go, and lead that wanderer in!
Sad she roves, without a refuge,—troubled by those gazing men;
Yet in form so bright, irradiate—is our palace where she moves.
Though so maniac-like, half-clothed,—like Heaven's long-eyed queen she seems."
She, those crowding men dispersing,—quickly to the palace top
Made her mount, and in amazement—her the mother-queen addressed,
"Thus though bowed and worn with sorrow,—such a shining form thou wear'st,

As through murky clouds the lightning,—tell me who thou art and whence:
For thy form is more than human,—of all ornament despoiled:
Men thou fear'st not, unattended,—in celestial beauty safe."

Hearing thus her gentle language,—Bhima's daughter made reply,
"Know me like thyself a mortal,—a distressed, devoted wife;
Of illustrious race a handmaid,—making where I will mine home;
On the roots and wild-fruits feeding,—lonely, at the fall of eve.
Gifted with unnumber'd virtues—is my true, my faithful lord,
And I still the hero followed,—like his shadow on the way.
'Twas his fate, with desp'rate fondness—to pursue the love of play,
And in play subdued and ruined—entered he yon lonely wood;
Him, arrayed in but one garment,—like a madman wandering wild,
To console my noble husband,—I too entered the deep wood;
He within that dreary forest—for some cause, to me unknown,
Wild with hunger, reft of reason,—that one single robe he lost.
I with but one robe, him naked,—frantic, and with mind diseased,
Following through the boundless forest—many a night I had not slept;
Then, when I had sunk to slumber,—me the blameless leaving there,
Half my garment having severed,—he his sinless consort fled;
Seeking him, my outcast husband,—night and day am I consumed:
Him I see not, ever shining—like the lotus cup, beloved;
Find him not, most like th' immortals,—lord of all, my life, my soul."

Even as thus, with eyes o'erflowing—uttered she her sad lament,
Sad herself, sad Bhima's daughter—did the mother queen address:
"Dwell with me, then, noble Lady,—deep the joy in thee I feel,
And the servants of my household—shall thy royal husband seek;
Haply hither he may wander,—as he roams about the world:
Dwelling here in peace and honour—thou thy husband wilt rejoin."

To the king of Chedi's mother—Damayanti made reply;
"On these terms, O nurse of heroes!—I with thee may make abode:
That I eat not broken victuals,—wash not feet with menial hand:
Nor with stranger men have converse—in my chaste, secluded state;
If that any man demand me—be he punished; if again,

Be he put to death on th' instant,—this the vow that I have sworn.
Only, if they seek my husband,—holy Brahmins will I see.
Be my terms by thee accepted,—gladly will I sojourn here,
But on other terms no sojourn—will this heart resolved admit."
Then to her with joyful spirit—spake the mother of the king:
"As thou wilt shall all be ordered,—be thou blest, since such thy vow."
Speaking thus to Bhima's daughter—did the royal mother then,
In these words address her daughter,—young Sunanda was her name:
"See this handmaid, my Sunanda,—gifted with a form divine;
She in age thy lovely compeer,—be she to thee as a friend;
Joined with her, in sweet communion—take thy pleasure without fear."
Young Sunanda, all rejoicing,—to her own abode went back,
Taking with her Damayanti,—circled with her virgin peers.

BOOK XIV.

DAMAYANTI when deserting—royal Nala fled, ere long
Blazing in the forest jungle—he a mighty fire beheld;
Thence as of a living being—from the midst a voice he heard:
"Hasten, Nala!" oft and loudly,—"Punyasloka, haste," it cried.
"Fear thou not," king Nala answered,—plunging in the ruddy flame;
There he saw the king of serpents—lying, coiled into a ring.
There with folded hands the serpent,—trembling, thus to Nala spake:
"Me, Karkotaka, the Serpent—know, thou sovereign of men;
Nárada, the famous hermit—I deceived, the holy sage;
He in righteous indignation—smote me with this awful curse:
'Stay thou there as one unmoving,—till king Nala passing by
Lead thee hence; save only Nala—none can free thee from this curse.'
Through this potent execration—I no step have power to move;
I the way to bliss will show thee,—if thou sav'st me from this fate.
I will show thee noble friendship,—serpent none is like to me;
Lightly shall I weigh, uplift me—in thy hand, with speed, O king."
Thus when spake the king of serpents—to a finger's size he shrank;
Him when Nala lightly lifted—to the unburning space he passed.

To the air all cool and temperate—brought him, by the flame unreached.
As he fain on th' earth would place him,—thus Karkotaka began.
" Move thou now, O king, and slowly—as thou movest, count thy steps.
Then the best of all good fortune—will I give thee, mighty armed!"
Ere the tenth step he had counted,—him the sudden serpent bit:
As he bit him, on the instant—all his kingly form was changed.
There he stood, and gazed in wonder,—Nala, on his altered form.
In his proper shape the serpent—saw the sovereign of men.
Then Karkotaka the serpent—thus to Nala comfort spake: [of men.
" Through my power thy form is altered,—lest thou should'st be known
He through whom thou'rt thus afflicted,—Nala, with intensest grief,
Through my poison, shall in anguish—ever dwell within thy soul.
All his body steeped in poison,—till he free thee from thy woe,
Shall he dwell within thee prison'd—in the ecstasy of pain. [wrong,
So from him, by whom, thou blameless!—suffered such unworthy
By the curse I lay upon him,—my deliverance shall be wrought.
Fear not thou the tusked wild boar,—foeman fear not thou, O king,
Neither Brahmin fear, nor Sages,—safe through my prevailing power.
King, this salutary poison—gives to thee nor grief nor pain;
In the battle, chief of Rajas,—victory is ever thine.
Go thou forth, thyself thus naming—Vahuca, the charioteer,
To the royal Rituparna—in the dice all-skilful he;
To Ayodhya's pleasant city,—sovereign of Nishadha! go;
He his skill in dice will give thee—for thy skill in taming steeds:
Of Ikshwàku's noble lineage,—he will be thy best of friends.
Thou the skill in dice possessing,—soon wilt rise again to bliss;
With thy consort reunited,—yield not up thy soul to grief.
Thou thy kingdom, thou thy children—wilt regain, the truth I speak.
When again thou would'st behold thee—in thy proper form, O king,
Summon me to thy remembrance,—and this garment put thou on:
In this garment clad resum'st thou—instantly thy proper form."
Saying thus, of vests celestial—gave he to the king a pair.
And king Nala, thus instructed,—gifted with these magic robes,
Instantly the king of serpents—vanished from his sight away.

BOOK XV.

VANISHED thus the King of Serpents,—set Nishadha's raja forth,
Rituparna's royal city—on the tenth day entered he.
Straight before the royal presence,—"Vahuca am I," he said,
"In the skill of taming horses—on the earth is not my peer;
Use me, where the difficult counsel,—where thou want'st the dex-
In the art of dressing viands—I am skilful above all. [trous hand;
Whatsoe'er the art, whatever—be most difficult to do,
I will strive to execute it,—take me to thy service, king."

RITUPARNA *spake.*

"Vahuca, I bid thee welcome,—all this service shalt thou do,
On my horses' rapid motion—deeply is my mind engaged.
Take thou then on thee the office,—that my steeds be fleet of foot,
Of my horse be thou the master,—hundred hundreds is thy pay:
Ever shalt thou have for comrades—Varshneya and Jivala:
With these two pursue thy pleasure,—Vahuca, abide with me."
Thus addressed, did Nala, honoured—by king Rituparna, long,
With Varshneya in that city—and with Jivala abide:
There abode he, sadly thinking—of Vidarbha's daughter still.
In the evening, every evening,—uttered he this single verse;
"Where is she, by thirst and hunger—worn, and weary, pious still,
Thinking of her unwise husband,—in whose presence is she now?"
Thus the raja ever speaking—Jivala one night addressed;
"Who is she, for whom thou grievest?—Vahuca, I fain would hear."
Answered thus the royal Nala,—"To a man of sense bereft,
Once belonged a peerless lady,—most infirm of word was he;
From some cause from her dissevered—went that frantic man away,
In his foolish soul thus parted—wanders he, by sorrow racked;
Night and day, and still for ever—by his parching grief consumed:
Nightly brooding o'er his sorrows—sings he this sad single verse.
O'er the whole wide earth a wanderer,—chance-alighting in some place,
Dwells that woeful man, unworthy,—ever wakeful with his grief.

Him that noble lady following—in the forest lone and dread,
Lives, of that bad man forsaken,—hard it is to say, she lives!
Lone, and young, the ways unknowing,—undeserving of such fate,
Pines she there with thirst and hunger,—hard it is to say, she lives.
In that vast and awful forest,—haunted by fierce beasts of prey,
By her lord she roams forsaken,—hapless, by that luckless lord."
Thus remembering Damayanti,—did Nishadha's king, unknown,
Long within that dwelling sojourn—in the palace of the king.

BOOK XVI.

NALA thus bereft of kingdom,—with his wife to slavery sunk,
Forth king Bhima sent the Brahmins—Nala through the world to seek.
Thus the royal Bhima charged them—with abundant wealth supplied:
"Go ye now and seek king Nala,—Damayanti seek, my child:
And, achieved this weighty business,—found Nishadha's royal lord,
Whosoe'er shall hither bring them,—shall a thousand kine receive;
And a royal grant for maintenance—of a village like a town.
If nor hither Damayanti—nor king Nala may be brought, [kine."
Know we where they are, rich guerdon—still we give, ten hundred
Thus addressed, the joyful Brahmins—went to every clime of earth,
Through the cities, through the kingdoms—seeking Nala and his queen:
Nala, or king Bhima's daughter—in no place might they behold.
Then a Brahmin, named Sudeva,—came to pleasant Chedi-pur;
There within the kingly palace—he Vidarbha's daughter saw,
Standing with the fair Sunanda,—on a royal holiday.
With her beauty once so peerless,—worthy now of little praise,
Like the sun-light feebly shining—through the dimness of a cloud.
Gazing on the large-eyed princess,—dull in look, and wasted still,
Lo, he thought, king Bhima's daughter,—pondering thus within his mind.

SUDEVA *spake.*

"Even as once I went to see her—such is yonder woman's form,
I my work have done, beholding,—like the goddess world-adored,

Like the full moon, darkly beauteous,—with her fair and swelling breasts,
Her, the queen, that with her brightness—makes each clime devoid of gloom,
With her lotus eyes expanding,—like Manmatha's queen divine ;
Like the moonlight in its fulness,—the desire of all the world.
From Vidarbha's pleasant waters—her by cruel fate plucked up,
Like a lotus flower uprooted,—with the mire and dirt around :
Like the pallid night, when Rahu—swallows up the darkened moon :
For her husband wan with sorrow,—like a gentle stream dried up ;
Like a pool, where droops the lotus,—whence the affrighted birds have fled,
By the elephant's proboscis—in its quiet depths disturbed.
Tender, soft-limbed, in a palace—fit, of precious stones, to dwell.
Like the lotus stem, uprooted,—parched and withered by the sun.
Fair in form, in soul as generous,—worthy of all bliss, unbless'd,
Like the young moon's slender crescent—in the heavens by dark clouds veiled.
Widowed now of all love's pleasures,—of her noble kin despoiled,
Wretched, bearing life, her husband—in her hope again to see.
To the unadorned, a husband—is the chiefest ornament ;
Of her husband if forsaken,—she in splendour is not bright.
Difficult must be the trial !—does king Nala, reft of her,
Still retain his wretched body,—nor with sorrow pine away ?
Her with her dark flowing tresses,—with her long and lotus eyes,
Worthy of all joy, thus joyless—as I see, my soul is wrung.
To the furthest shore of sorrow—when will pass this beauteous queen ?
To her husband reunited,—as the moon's bride to the moon ?
Her recovering shall king Nala—to his happiness return,
King, albeit despoiled of kingdom,—he his realm shall reassume ;
In their age and virtues equal,—equal in their noble race,
He alone of her is worthy,—worthy she alone of him.
Me beseems it of that peerless—of that brave and prudent king,
To console the loyal consort,—pining for her husband's sight.
Her will I address with comfort—with her moonlike glowing face.
Her with woe once unacquainted,—woeful now and lost in thought."

Thus when he had gazed and noted—all her marks, her features well,
To the daughter of king Bhima—thus the sage Sudeva spake:
"I am named Sudeva, lady,—I, thy brother's chosen friend,
By king Bhima's royal mandate—hither come in search of thee.
Well thy sire, thy royal mother,—well thy noble brethren fare,
And well fare those little infants,—well and happy are they both.
For thy sake thy countless kindred—sit as though of sense bereft:
Seeking thee a hundred Brahmins—now are wandering o'er the earth."
She no sooner knew Sudeva,—Damayanti, of her kin,
Many a question asked in order—and of every friend beloved.
And the daughter of Vidarbha—freely wept, so sudden thus
On Sudeva, best of Brahmins—gazing, on her brother's friend.
Her beheld the young Sunanda—weeping, wasted with distress,
As she thus her secret converse—with the wise Sudeva held.
Thus she spake unto her mother—"Lo, how fast our handmaid weeps,
Since her meeting with the Brahmin,—who she is, thou now may'st know."
Forth the king of Chedi's mother—from the inner chamber went,
And she passed where with the Brahmin—that mysterious woman stood.
Them the mother-queen Sudeva—bade before her presence stand;
And she asked, "Whose wife, whose daughter—may this noble stranger be?
From her kindred how dissevered—from her husband, the soft-eyed?
Is she known to thee, O Brahmin,—canst thou tell from whence she came?
This I fain would hear, and clearly—all her strange and wonderous tale.
Tell me all that hath befallen—to this heaven-formed, plainly tell."
Best of Brahmins, thus Sudeva—by the mother queen addressed,
All the truth of Damayanti,—sitting at his ease, declared.

BOOK XVII.

" In Vidarbha the just monarch,—Bhima, in his glory dwells ;
Of that king is she the daughter,—Damayanti is her name ;
And the raja of Nishadha,—Nala, Virasena's son,
Of that king is she the consort,—Punyasloka named, the Wise.
Him in play his brother worsted,—spoiled of realm the king of earth :
He set forth with Damayanti,—whither is unknown of men.
For the sake of Damayanti—wander we about the earth ;
Till I found yon noble woman—in the palace of your son.
Like to her of mortal women—is there none, her beauty's peer ;
In the midst, between her eyebrows—from her birth a lovely mole
Dark was seen, and like a lotus,—that hath vanished from my sight,
Covered over with defilement,—like the moon behind a cloud.
This soft mark of perfect beauty,—fashioned thus by Brahma's self,
As at change the moon's thin crescent,—only dim and faintly gleams.
Yet her beauty is not faded,—clouded o'er with toil and mire
Though she be, it shines apparent, like the native unwrought gold.
With that beauteous form yon woman,—gifted with that lovely mole,
Instant knew I for the Princess,—as the heat betrays the fire."

VRIHADASVA *spake.*

To Sudeva as she listened—uttering thus his strange discourse :
All the dust that mole concealing—young Sunanda washed away.
By the obscuring dust unclouded,—shining out that mole appeared ;
On the brow of Damayanti,—like the unclouded moon in heaven.
Gazing on that mole, Sunanda—and the mother of the king,
Wept as fondly they embraced her,—and an instant silent stood.
Then her tears awhile suppressing,—thus the royal mother spake :
" Thou art mine own sister's daughter,—by that beauteous mole made
I, oh beauteous, and thy mother,—of that lofty-minded king, [known ;
Are the daughters, king Sudaman,—he that in Dasarna reigns ;
She was wedded to king Bhima,—and to Viravahu I.
In my father's home, Dasarna,—once I saw thee, newly born.

As to me thy father's lineage—is akin, so mine to thee ;
Whatsoe'er my power commandeth,—Damayanti, all is thine."
To the queen did Damayanti—in the gladness of her heart,
Having bowed in courteous homage,—to her mother's sister speak :
" While unknown I might continue,—gladly dwelt I here with thee ;
Every want supplied on th' instant,—guarded by thy gentle care.
Yet than even this pleasant dwelling—a more pleasant may there be ;
Long a banished woman, mother!—give me leave from hence to part,
Thither where my infant children—dwell, my tender little ones,
Orphaned of their sire, in sorrow,—orphaned, ah, how long of me !
If thou yet wilt grant a favour—o'er all other favours dear,
To Vidarbha would I journey,—quick the palanquin command."
" Be it so," her mother's sister—joyful, instant made reply.
Guarded by a mighty army—with th' approval of her son,
Sent the queen, that happy lady—in a palanquin, by men
Borne aloft, and well provided—with all raiment, drink, and food.
Thus the princess to Vidarbha—after brief delay returned.
Her, her whole assembled kindred—welcomed home with pride and joy,
All in health she found her kinsmen,—and that lovely infant pair,
With her mother, with her father,—and her sister troop of friends.
To the gods she paid her worship,—to the Brahmins in her joy ;
So the queenly Damayanti—all in noblest guise performed.
And her royal sire Sudeva—with the thousand kine made glad,
Joyous to behold his daughter,—with a village and much wealth.
There, when in her father's palace—she the quiet night had passed,
In these words the noble lady—to her mother 'gan to speak :
" If in life thou would'st preserve me,—mother, hear the truth I speak ;
Home to bring the hero Nala,—be it now thy chiefest toil."
Thus addressed by Damayanti,—very sorrowful the queen
Clouded all her face with weeping,—not a word in answer spake.
But the princess thus afflicted—when the female train beheld,
" Woe ! oh woe !" they shrieked together,—all in pitying sadness wept.
To the mighty raja Bhima—did the queen that speech relate.
"' Damayanti, lo thy daughter—for her husband sits and mourns.'
Breaking through all bashful silence,—thus, oh king, to me she spake

'Be it now thy servants' business—to find out the king of men.'"
Urged by her the king his Brahmins,—to his will obedient all,
Sent around to every region—"Be your care the king to find."
Then those Brahmins at the mandate—of Vidarbha's royal lord,
First drew near to Damayanti—"Lo, now set we forth," they said.
Then to them spake Bhima's daughter—"In all realms be this your speech,
Wheresoever men assemble,—this repeat again, again:
'Whither went'st thou then, oh gamester!—half my garment severing off,
Leaving me within the forest,—all forsaken, thy beloved.
Even as thou commandedst, sits she—sadly waiting thy return.
Parched with sorrow sits that woman—in her scant half garment clad.
Oh to her thus ever weeping—in the extreme of her distress,
Grant thy pity, noble hero,—answer to her earnest prayer.'
Be this also said, to move him—to compassionate my state,
'(By the wind within the forest—fanned, intensely burns the fire.)
Ever by her consort cherished—and sustained the wife should be.
Why hast thou forgot that maxim,—thou in every duty skilled.
Thou wert ever called the generous,—thou the gentle and the wise.
Art thou now estranged from pity,—through my sad injurious fate.
Prince of men, O grant thy pity,—grant it, lord of men, to me;
"Mercy is the chief of duties,"—oft from thine own lips I've heard.'
Thus as ye are ever speaking,—should there any one reply,
Mark him well, lest he be Nala,—who he is, and where he dwells.
He who to this speech hath listened,—and hath thus his answer made,
Be his words, O best of Brahmins,—treasured and brought home to me,
Lest he haply should discover—that by my command ye speak,
That again ye may approach him—do ye this without delay.
Whether he be of the wealthy,—whether of the poor he be;
Be he covetous of riches,—learn ye all he would desire."
Thus addressed, went forth the Brahmins—to the realms on every side,
Seeking out the royal Nala—in his dark concealed distress.
They through royal cities, hamlets,—pastoral dwellings, hermits' cells,
Nala every where went seeking,—yet those Brahmins found him not.
All in every part went speaking—in the language they were taught;
In the words of Damayanti—spake they in the ears of men.

BOOK XVIII.

Long the time that passed, a Brahmin—wise Parnada was his name,
Home returning to the city,—thus to Bhima's daughter spake:
"Damayanti! royal Nala—as I sought, Nishadha's king,
Came I to Ayodhya's city,—the Bhangasuri's abode.
Stood before me, eager listening—to the words thou bad'st us speak,
He, the prosperous Rituparna—all excelling! such his name.
Thus as spake I, answered nothing—Rituparna, king of men;
Nor of all that full assemblage—more than once addressed by me.
By the king dismissed, when sate I—in a solitary place,
One of Rituparna's household,—Vahuca his name, drew near,
Charioteer of that great raja,—with short arms and all deformed,
Skilled to drive the rapid chariot,—skilled the viands to prepare.
He, when much he'd groaned in anguish,—and had wept again, again,
First his courteous salutation—made, then spake in words like these:
'Even in the extreme of misery—noble women still preserve
Over their ownselves the mastery,—by their virtues winning heaven;
Of their faithless lords abandoned,—anger feel not even then.
In the breastplate of their virtue—noble women live unharmed.
By the wretched, by the senseless,—by the lost to every joy,
She by such a lord forsaken,—yet to anger will not yield.
Against him his sustenance seeking,—of his robe by birds despoiled,
Him consumed with utmost misery,—still no wrath the dark-hued feels;
Treated well, or ill entreated,—when her husband she beholds,
Spoiled of bliss, bereft of kingdom,—famine-wasted, worn with woe.'
Having heard the stranger's language—hither hasted I to come.
Thou hast heard, be thine the judgment,—to the king relate thou all."
To Parnada having listened—with her eyes o'erflowed with tears,
Secretly went Damayanti—and her mother thus addressed:
"Let not what I speak to Bhima,—O my mother, be made known—
In thy presence to Sudeva—best of Brahmins, I would speak.
Let not this my secret counsel—to king Bhima be disclosed;

This the object we must compass,—if thy daughter thou wouldst please,
As myself was to my kindred—swiftly by Sudeva brought,
With the same good fortune swiftly—may Sudeva part from hence,
Home to bring the royal Nala,—mother, to Ayodhya's town."

Resting from his toil, Parnada,—of the Brahmin race the best,
Did the daughter of Vidarbha—honour, and with wealth reward.
" Brahmin ! home if come my Nala,—richer guerdon will I give ;
Much hast thou achieved, and wisely,—so as none but thou has done.
That again with my lost husband,—noblest Brahmin, I may meet."
Thus addressed, his grateful homage—and his benedictions paid,
Having thus achieved his mission,—home the wise Parnada went.

Then accosting good Sudeva,—Damayanti thus began,
And before her mother's presence—in her pain and grief she spake :
" Go, Sudeva, to the city,—where Ayodhya's raja dwells,
Speak thou thus to Rituparna,—' Come, as of thine own accord.
Once again her Swayembara—does king Bhima's daughter hold,
Damayanti, thither hasten—all the kings and sons of kings ;
Closely now the time is reckoned,—when to-morrow's dawn appears,
If that thou would'st win the Princess,—speed thou, tamer of thy foes;
When the sun is in his rising—she a second lord will choose :
Whether lives or is not living—royal Nala, no one knows.' "
Thus, as he received his mission—hastening to the king, he spake,
To the royal Rituparna—spake Sudeva, in these words.

BOOK XIX.

Hearing thus Sudeva's language,—Rituparna, king of men
With a gentle voice and blandly—thus to Vahuca began.
" Where the princess Damayanti—doth her Swayembara hold
In one day to far Vidarbha,—Vahuca, I fain would go."
In these words the unknown Nala—by his royal lord addressed,
All his heart was torn with anguish,—thus the lofty-minded thought—
" Can she speak thus, Damayanti—thus with sorrow frantic act ?

Is't a stratagem thus subtly—for my sake devised and plann'd?
To desire this deed unholy—is that holy princess driven,
Wrong'd by me, her basest husband—miserable, mind-estranged!
Fickle is the heart of woman,—grievous too is my offence!
Hence she thus might act ignobly,—in her exile, reft of friends,
Soul-disturbed by her great sorrow,—in the excess of her despair.
No! she could not thus have acted,—she with noble offspring blest.
Where the truth, and where the falsehood,—setting forth, I best shall judge,
I the will of Rituparna,—for mine own sake, will obey."
Thus within his mind revolving,—Vahuca, his wretched mind,
With his folded hands addressed he—Rituparna, king of men:
"I thy mandate will accomplish,—I will go, O king of men,
In a single day, O raja,—to Vidarbha's royal town."
Vahuca of all the coursers—did a close inspection make,
Entering in the royal stable—by Bhangasuri's command.
Ever urged by Rituparna,—Vahuca, in horses skilled,
Long within himself debating—which the fleetest steeds to choose,
He approached four slender coursers—fit, and powerful for the road,
Blending mighty strength with fleetness,—high in courage and in blood;
Free from all the well-known vices,—broad of nostril—large of jaw;
With the ten good marks distinguished,—born in Sindhu—fleet as wind.
As he gazed upon those coursers—spoke the king, almost in wrath:
"Is then thus fulfilled our mandate?—think not to deceive us so.
How will these my coursers bear us,—slight in strength and slightly breathed—
How can such a way be travelled—and so long, by steeds like these?"

VAHUCA *spake.*

"Two on th' head, one on the forehead,—two and two on either flank—
Two, behold, the chest discloses,—and upon the crupper one—
These the horses to Vidharba—that will bear us, doubt not thou;
Yet, if others thou preferrest,—speak, and I will yoke them straight."

RITUPARNA *spake.*

"In the knowledge thou of horses,—Vahuca, hast matchless skill;
Whichsoe'er thou think'st the fittest,—harness thou without delay."
Then those four excelling horses,—nobly bred,—of courage high,

In their harness to the chariot—did the skilful Nala yoke.—
To the chariot yoked, as mounted—in his eager haste the king,
To the earth those best of horses—bowed their knees, and stooped them down.
Then the noblest of all heroes,—Nala, with a soothing voice,
Spake unto those horses, gifted—both with fleetness and with strength.
Up the reins when he had gathered,—he the charioteer bade mount,
First, Varshneya, skilled in driving,—at full speed then set he forth.

Urged by Vahuca, those coursers—to the utmost of their speed,
All at once in th' air sprung upward—as the driver to unseat.
Then, as he beheld those horses,—bearing him as fleet as wind,
Did the monarch of Ayodhya—in his silent wonder sit.
When the rattling of the chariot,—when the guiding of the reins,
When of Vahuca the science—saw he, thus Varshneya thought:
"Is it Matali, the chariot—of the king of heaven that drives?
Lo, in Vahuca each virtue—of that godlike charioteer!
Is it Salihotra skilful—in the race, the strength of steeds,
That hath ta'en a human body,—thus all-glorious to behold?
Is't, or can it be, king Nala,—conqueror of his foemen's realms?
Is the lord of men before us?"—thus within himself he thought.
"If the skill possessed by Nala—Vahuca possesseth too,
Lo, of Vahuca the knowledge—and of Nala equal seems;
And of Vahuca and Nala—thus alike the age should be.
If 'tis not the noble Nala,—it is one of equal skill.
Mighty ones, disguised, are wandering—in the precincts of this earth.
They, divine by inborn nature,—but in earthly forms concealed.
His deformity of body—that my judgment still confounds;
Yet that proof alone is wanting,—what shall then my judgment be?
In their age they still are equal,—though unlike that form misshaped,
Nala gifted with all virtues—Vahuca I needs must deem."
Thus the charioteer Varshneya—sate debating in his mind;
Much, and much again he pondered—in the silence of his thought.
But the royal Rituparna—Vahuca's surpassing skill,
With the charioteer Varshneya,—sate admiring, and rejoiced.
In the guiding of the coursers—his attentive hand he watched,
Wondered at his skill consummate,—in consummate joy himself.

BOOK XX.

Over rivers, over mountains,—through the forests, over lakes,
Fleetly passed they, rapid gliding,—like a bird along the air;
As the chariot swiftly travelled,—lo, Bhangasuri the king
Saw his upper garment fallen—from the lofty chariot seat;
Though in urgent haste, no sooner—he his fallen mantle saw,
Than the king exclaimed to Nala—"Pause, and let us take it up:
Check, an instant, mighty-minded!—check thy fiery-footed steeds,
While Varshneya, swift dismounting,—bears me back my fallen robe."
Nala answered, "Far behind us—doth thy fallen garment lie;
Ten miles, lo, it lies behind us,—turn we not, to gain it, back."
Answered thus by noble Nala—then Bhangasuri the king,
Bowed with fruit, within the forest—saw a tall Vibhitak tree:
Gazing on that tree, the raja—spake to Vahuca in haste,
"Now, O charioteer, in numbers, thou shalt see my passing skill.
Each one knows not every science,—none there is that all things knows:
Perfect skill in every knowledge—in one mind there may not be.
On yon tree are leaves how many?—Vahuca, how many fruit?
Say, how many are there fallen?—one above a hundred, there.
One leaf is there 'bove a hundred—and one fruit, O Vahuca!
And of leaves are five ten millions—hanging on those branches two.
Those two branches if thou gather—and the twigs that on them grow,
On those two are fruits two thousand—and a hundred, less by five."
Then, when he had check'd the chariot—answered Vahuca the king,
"What thou speakest, to mine eyesight—all invisible appears;
Visible I'll make it, counting—on yon boughs the leaves and fruit:
Then, when we have strictly numbered—I mistrust mine eyes no more.
In thy presence, king, I'll number—yonder tall Vibhitak tree.
Whether it may be, or may not,—this not done, I cannot know.
I will number, thou beholding—all its fruits, O king of men,
But an instant let Varshneya—hold the bridles of the steeds."

To the charioteer the raja—answered, "Time is none to stay."
Vahuca replied, all eager—his own purpose to fulfil,
"Either stay thou here an instant—or go onward in thy speed,
With the charioteer Varshneya,—go, for straight the road before."
Answered him king Rituparna—with a bland and soothing voice:
"Charioteer! on earth thine equal,—Vahuca, there may not be;
By thy guidance, skilled in horses!—to Vidarbha I would go:
I in thee have placed reliance,—interrupt not then our course:
Willingly will I obey thee,—Vahuca, in what thou ask'st,
If this day we reach Vidarbha,—ere the sun hath sunk in night."
Vahuca replied, "No sooner—have I numbered yonder fruit,
To Vidarbha will I hasten,—grant me then my prayer, O king."
Then the raja, all reluctant—"Stay then, and begin to count;
Of one branch one part, O blameless—from the tall Vibhitak tree,
Man of truth, begin to number,—and make glad thine inmost heart."
From the chariot quick alighting,—Nala tore the branch away.
Then, his soul possess'd with wonder—to the raja thus he said;
"Having counted, as thou sawest,—even so many fruits there are,
Marvellous thy power, O monarch,—by mine eyes beheld and proved,
Of that wonder-working science—fain the secret would I hear."
Then the raja spake in answer,—eager to pursue his way,
"I of dice possess the science,—and in numbers thus am skilled."
Vahuca replied; "That science—if to me thou wilt impart,
"In return, O king, receive thou—my surpassing skill in steeds."
Then the raja Rituparna—by his pressing need induced,
Eager for that skill in horses—"Be it so," thus 'gan to say;
"Well, O Vahuca, thou speakest—thou my skill in dice receive,
And of steeds thy wondrous knowledge—be to me a meet return."
Rituparna, all his science—saying this, to Nala gave.
Soon as he in dice grew skilful—Kali from his body passed:
He Karkotaka's foul poison—vomiting from out his mouth,
Went from forth his body Kali,—tortured by that fiery curse.
Nala, wasted by that conflict—came not instant to himself,
But, released from that dread venom,—Kali his own form resumed:

And Nishadha's monarch, Nala—fain would curse him in his ire.
Him addressed the fearful Kali,—trembling, and with folded hands;
"Lord of men, restrain thine anger,—I will give thee matchless fame;
Indrasena's wrathful mother—laid on me her fatal curse,
When by thee she was deserted,—since that time, O king of men,
I have dwelt in thee in anguish,—in the ecstasy of pain.
By the King of Serpent's poison—I have burned by night, by day;
To thy mercy now for refuge—flee I, hear my speech, O king:
Wheresoe'er men, unforgetful,—through the world shall laud thy name,
Shall the awful dread of Kali—never in their soul abide.
If thou wilt not curse me, trembling—and to thee for refuge fled."
Thus addressed, the royal Nala—all his rising wrath suppressed,
And the fearful Kali entered—in the cloven Vibhitak tree:
To no eyes but those of Nala—visible, had Kali spoken.
Then the monarch of Nishadha—from his inward fever freed,
When away had vanished Kali,—when the fruits he had numbered all,
Triumphing in joy unwonted,—blazing in his splendour forth,
Proudly mounting on the chariot,—onward urged the rapid steeds.
But that tree, by Kali entered,—since that time stands aye accursed.
Those fleet horses, forward flying,—like to birds, again, again,
All his soul elate with transport—Nala swifter, swifter drove;
With his face towards Vidarbha—rode the raja in his pride:
And when forward Nala journeyed,—Kali to his home returned.
So released from all his sufferings—Nala went, the king of men,
Dispossessed by Kali, wanting—only now his proper form.

BOOK XXI.

With the evening in Vidarbha—men at watch, as they drew near,
Mighty Rituparna's coming—to king Bhima did proclaim.
Then that king, by Bhima's mandate—entered in Kundina's walls,
All the region round him echoing—with the thunders of his car.
But the echoing of that chariot—when king Nala's horses heard,
In their joy they pawed and trampled,—even as Nala's self were there.

Damayanti, too, the rushing—of king Nala's chariot heard.
As a cloud that hoarsely thunders—at the coming of the rains.
All her heart was thrilled with wonder—at that old familiar sound.
On they seemed to come, as Nala—drove of yore his trampling steeds:
Like it seemed to Bhima's daughter,—and e'en so to Nala's steeds.
On the palace roofs the peacocks,—th' elephants within their stalls,
And the horses heard the rolling—of the mighty monarch's car.
Elephants and peacocks hearing—the fleet chariot rattling on,
Up they raised their necks and clamoured,—as at sound of coming rain.

DAMAYANTI *spake.*

"How the rolling of yon chariot—filling, as it seems, th' earth,
Thrills my soul with unknown transport,—it is Nala, king of men.
If this day I see not Nala—with his glowing moonlike face,
Him, the king with countless virtues,—I shall perish without doubt.
If this day within th' embraces—of that hero's clasping arms,
I the gentle pressure feel not,—without doubt I shall not live.
If 'tis not, like cloud of thunder—he that comes, Nishadha's king,
I this day the fire will enter,—burning like the hue of gold.
In his might like the strong lion,—like the raging elephant,
Comes he not, the prince of princes,—I shall perish without doubt.
Not a falsehood I remember,—I remember no offence;
Not an idle word remember;—in his noble converse free.
Lofty, patient, like a hero,—liberal beyond all kings,
Nought ignoble, as the eunuch—even in private, may he do.
As I think upon his virtues,—as I think by day, by night,
All my heart is rent with anguish,—widowed of its own beloved."

Thus lamenting, she ascended,—as with frenzied mind possessed,
To the palace roof's high terrace—to behold the king of men.
In the middle court high seated—in the car, the lord of earth,
Rituparna with Varshneya—and with Vahuca she saw:
When Varshneya from that chariot—and when Vahuca came down,
He let loose those noble coursers,—and he stopped the glowing car.
From that chariot-seat descended—Rituparna, king of men,
To the noble monarch Bhima—he drew near, for strength renowned.

Him received with highest honour—Bhima, for without due cause,
Deemed not he, the mighty raja—with such urgent speed had come.
"Wherefore com'st thou! hail and welcome"—thus that gracious
king enquires;
For his daughter's sake he knew not—that the lord of men had come.
But the raja Rituparna—great in wisdom as in might,
When nor king within the palace,—nor king's son he could behold,
Nor of Swayembara heard he,—nor assembled Brahmins saw.
Thus within his mind deep pondering,—spoke of Kosala the lord.
"Hither, O majestic Bhima—to salute thee am I come."
But king Bhima smiled in secret—as he thought within his mind,
"What the cause of this far journey—of a hundred Yojanas.
Passing through so many cities—for this cause he set not forth;
For this cause of little moment,—to our court he hath not come:
What the real cause, hereafter—haply I may chance to know"
After royal entertainment—then the king his guest dismissed:
"Take then thy repose," thus said he,—"weary of thy journey, rest."
He refreshed, with courteous homage—of that courteous king took
leave,
Ushered by the royal servants,—to th' appointed chamber went:
There retired king Rituparna—with Varshneya in his suite.
Vahuca, meantime, the chariot—to the chariot-house had led,
There the coursers he unharnessed,—skilfully he dressed them there,
And with gentle words caressed them,—on the chariot seat sate down.
But the woeful Damayanti,—when Bhangasuri she'd seen,
And the charioteer Varshneya,—and the seeming Vahuca,
Thought within Vidarbha's princess—"Whose was that fleet chariot's
Such it seems as noble Nala's,—yet no Nala do I see. [sound?
Hath the charioteer Varshneya—Nala's noble science learned?
Therefore did the thundering chariot—sound as driven by Nala's self?
Or may royal Rituparna—like the skilful Nala drive?
Therefore did the rolling chariot—seem as of Nishadha's king?"
Thus when Damayanti pondered—in the silence of her soul,
Sent she then her beauteous handmaid—to that king her messenger.

BOOK XXII.

DAMAYANTI *spake.*

" Go, Kesinia, go, enquire thou,—who is yonder charioteer,
On the chariot seat reposing,—all deformed, with arms so short?
Blessed maid, approach, and courteous—open thou thy bland discourse:
Undespis'd, ask thou thy question,—and the truth let him reply.
Much and sorely do I doubt me,—whether Nala it may be,
As my bosom's rapture augurs,—as the gladness of my heart.
Speak thou, ere thou close the converse,—even as good Parnada spake,
And his answer, slender-waisted,—undespis'd, remember thou."
Then to Vahuca departing,—went that zealous messenger,
On the palace' loftiest terrace—Damayanti sate and gazed.

KESINIA *spake.*

" Happy omen mark thy coming,—I salute thee, king of men:
Of the princess Damayanti—hear, O lord of men, the speech:
'From what region came ye hither,—with what purpose are ye come?'
Answer thou, as may beseem you,—so Vidarbha's princess wills."

VAHUCA *spake.*

" Soon a second Swayembara, heard the king of Kosala,
Damayanti holds: to-morrow—will it be, the Brahmin said:
Hearing this, with fleetest coursers—that a hundred yojans' speed,
Set he forth, the wind less rapid,—and his charioteer am I."

KESINIA *spake.*

" Who the third that journeys with you,—who is he, and what his race?
Of what race art thou? this office—wherefore dost thou undertake?"

VAHUCA *spake.*

" 'Tis the far-renowned Varshneya,—Punyasloka's charioteer:
He, when Nala fled an exile—to Bhangasuri retired.
Skilful I in taming horses,—and a famous charioteer,
Rituparna's chosen driver,—dresser of his food am I."

KESINIA *spake.*

" Knows the charioteer Varshneya,—whither royal Nala went?
Of his fortune hath he told thee,—Vahuca, what hath he said?"

VAHUCA *spake.*

"He of the unhappy Nala—safe the children borne away,
Wheresoe'er he would, departed,—of king Nala knows he nought:
Nothing of Nishadha's raja,—fair one! living man doth know.
Through the world, concealed, he wanders,—having lost his proper form.
Only Nala's self of Nala—knows, and his own inward soul,
Of himself to living mortal—Nala will no sign betray."

KESINIA *spake.*

"He that to Ayodhya's city—went, the holy Brahmin first,
Of his faithful wife these sayings—uttered once and once again;
'Whither went'st thou then, O gamester,—half my garment severing off?
Leaving her within the forest,—all forsaken, thy belov'd?
Even as thou commandedst, sits she,—sadly waiting thy return,
Day and night, consumed with sorrow,—in her scant half garment clad.
O to her for ever weeping—in the extreme of her distress,
Grant thy pity, noble hero,—answer to her earnest prayer.'
Speak again the words thou uttered'st,—words of comfort to her soul,
The renowned Vidarbha's princess—fain that speech would hear again,
When the Brahmin thus had spoken—what thou answered'st back to him,
That again Vidarbha's princess—in the self-same words would hear."
Of king Nala, by the handmaid,—fair Kesinia thus addressed, tears.
All the heart was wrung with sorrow,—and the eyes o'erflowed with
But his anguish still suppressing,—inly though consumed, the king,
With a voice half choked with weeping,—thus repeated his reply.
"Even in the extreme of misery—noble women still preserve
Over their ownselves the mastery,—by their virtues winning heaven
By their faithless lords abandoned,—anger feel they not, e'en then;
In the breastplate of their virtue—noble women live unharmed.
By the wretched, by the senseless—by the lost to every joy,
She by such a lord forsaken,—to resentment will not yield.
Against him, by hunger wasted,—of his robe by birds despoiled,
Him consumed with utmost misery,—still no wrath, the dark-hued feels;
Treated well, or ill-entreated,—when her husband 'tis she sees

Spoiled of bliss, bereft of kingdom,—famine wasted, worn with woe."
In these words as spake king Nala—in the anguish of his heart,
Could he not refrain from weeping,—his unwilling tears burst forth.
Then departing, fair Kesinia—told to Damayanti all,
All that Vahuca had spoken,—all th' emotion he betrayed.

BOOK XXIII.

Hearing this, fair Damayanti—all abandoned to her grief,
Thinking still that he was Nala,—to Kesinia spake again.
" Go, Kesinia, go, examine—Vahuca, and all his acts,
Silent take thy stand beside him,—and observe whate'er he does ;
Nor, Kesinia, be there given him—fire his labours to assist :
Neither be there given him water—in thy haste, at his demand :
All, when thou hast well observed him,—every act to me repeat,
Every act that more than mortal—seems in Vahuca, relate."
Thus addressed by Damayanti,—straight Kesinia went again,
Of the tamer of the horses—every act observed, came back ;
Every act as she had seen it—she to Damayanti told :
Every more than mortal wonder—that in Vahuca appeared.

Kesinia *spake.*

" Very holy is he, never—mortal man, in all my life,
Have I seen, or have I heard of,—Damayanti, like to him.
He drew near the lowly entrance,—bowed not down his stately head ;
On the instant, as it saw him,—up th' expanding portal rose.
For the use of Rituparna—much and various viands came ;
Sent, as meet, by royal Bhima,—and abundant animal food.
These to cleanse, with meet ablution—were capacious vessels brought ;
As he looked on them, the vessels—stood, upon the instant, full.
Then, the meet ablutions over,—Vahuca went forth, and took
Of the withered grass a handful,—held it upward to the sun :
On the instant, brightly blazing—shone the all-consuming fire.
Much I marvelled at the wonder,—and in mute amazement stood ;

Lo, a second greater marvel—sudden burst upon my sight!
He that blazing fire stood handling,—yet unharmed, unburned, remained.
At his will flows forth the water,—at his will it sinks again.
And another greater wonder,—lady, did I there behold:
He the flowers which he had taken—gently moulded in his hands,
In his hands the flowers, so moulded—as with freshening life endued,
Blossomed out with richer fragrance,—stood erect upon their stems:
All these marvels having noted,—swiftly came I back to thee."
Damayanti when these wonders—of the king of men she heard,
Thought yet more king Nala present,—thought her utmost wish
Deeming still her royal consort—in the form of Vahuca, [achieved.
With a gentle voice and weeping—to Kesinia spake again:
"Go, again, Kesinia, secret,—and by Vahuca unseen,
Of those viands bring a portion—by his skilful hand prepared:"
She to Vahuca approaching,—unperceived stole soft away
Of the well-cooked meat a morsel,—warm she bore it in her haste,
And to Damayanti gave it—fair Kesinia, undelayed.
Of the food prepared by Nala—well the flavour did she know;
Tasting it she shrieked in transport,—"Nala is yon charioteer."
Trying then a new emotion,—of her mouth ablution made:
She her pair of infant children—with Kesinia sent to him.
Soon as he young Indrasena—and her little brother saw,
Up he sprang, his arms wound round them—to his bosom folding both;
When he gazed upon the children,—like the children of the gods,
All his heart o'erflowed with pity,—and unwilling tears broke forth.
Yet Nishadha's lord perceiving—she his strong emotion marked,
From his hold released the children,—to Kesinia speaking thus:
"Oh! so like mine own twin children—was yon lovely infant pair,
Seeing them thus unexpected—have I broken out in tears:
If so oft thou comest hither,—men some evil will suspect,
We within this land are strangers,—beauteous maiden, part in peace."

BOOK XXIV.

SEEING the profound emotion—of that wisest king of men,
Passing back in haste, Kesinia—told to Damayanti all:
Then again did Damayanti—mission to Kesinia give,
To approach her royal mother,—in her haste her lord to see.
"Vahuca we've watched most closely,—Nala we suspect him still;
Only from his form we doubt him,—this myself would fain behold.
Cause him enter here, my mother,—to my wishes condescend;
Known or unknown to my father,—let it be decided now."
By that handmaid thus accosted,—then the queen to Bhima told
All his daughter's secret counsel,—and the raja gave assent.
Instant from her sire the princess,—from her mother leave obtained,
Bade them make king Nala enter—in the chamber where she dwelt.
Sudden as he gazed upon her,—upon Damayanti gazed,
Nala, he was seized with anguish,—and with tears his eyes o'erflowed.
And when Damayanti gazed on—Nala, thus approaching near,
With an agonizing sorrow—was the noble lady seized.
Clad, then, in a scarlet mantle,—hair dishevelled, mire-defiled,
Unto Vahuca this language—Damayanti thus addressed:
"Vahuca beheld'st thou ever—an upright and noble man,
Who departed and abandoned—in the wood his sleeping wife?
The beloved wife, and blameless,—in the wild wood, worn with grief?
Who was he who thus forsook her?—who but Nala, king of men?
To the lord of earth from folly—what offence can I have given?
That he fled, within the forest—leaving me, by sleep oppressed?
Openly, the gods rejected,—was he chosen by me, my lord:
Could he leave the true, the loving,—her that hath his children borne!
By the nuptial fire, in presence—of the gods, he clasped my hand,
'I will be,' this truth he plighted,—whither did he then depart?"
While all this in broken accents—sadly Damayanti spoke,
From her eyes the drops of sorrow—flowed in copious torrents down.

Those dark eyes, with vermeil corners,—thus with trembling moisture
When king Nala saw, and gazed on,—to the sorrowful he spake. [dewed,
" Gaming that I lost my kingdom—'twas not thine own guilty deed,
It was Kali wrought within me,—hence it was I fled from thee ;
Therefore he, in th' hour of trial—smitten by thy scathing curse,
In the wild wood as thou wanderest—grieving night and day for me,
Kali dwelt within my body,—burning with thy powerful curse,
Ever burning, fiercer, hotter,—as when fire is heaped on fire.
He, by my religious patience,—my devotion, now subdued,
Lo ! the end of all our sorrows,—beautiful ! is now at hand.
I, the evil one departed,—hither have made haste to come ;
For thy sake, O round-limbed ! only ;—other business have I none.
Yet, O how may high-born woman—from her vowed, her plighted lord,
Swerving, choose another husband,—even as thou, O trembler, would'st!
Over all the earth the heralds—travel by the king's command,
' Now the daughter of king Bhima—will a second husband choose,
Free from every tie, as wills she,—as her fancy may beseem.'
Hearing this, came hither speeding—king Bhángásuri in haste."
Damayanti, when from Nala—heard she this his grievous charge,
With her folded hands and trembling—thus to Nala made reply :
" Do not me, O noble-minded,—of such shameless guilt suspect,
Thou, when I the gods rejected,—Nala, wert my chosen lord.
Only thee to find, the Brahmins—went to the ten regions forth,
Chaunting to their holy measures—but the words that I had taught.
Then that Brahmin wise, Parnada,—such the name he bears, O king,
Thee in Kosala, the palace—of king Rituparna saw. [ceived.
There to thee my words addressed he,—answer there from thee re-
I this subtle wile imagined,—king of men, to bring thee here.
Since, beside thyself, no mortal—in the world, within the day,
Could drive on the fleetest coursers—for a hundred Yojanas.
To attest this truth, O monarch !—thus I touch thy sacred feet ;
Even in heart have I committed—never evil thought 'gainst thee.
He through all the world that wanders,—witness, the all-seeing wind,
Let him now of life bereave me,—if in this 'gainst thee I've sinned :

And the sun that moveth ever—over all the world, on high,
Let him now of life bereave me,—if in this 'gainst thee I've sinned.
Witness, too, the moon that permeates—every being's inmost thought;
Let her too of life bereave me,—if in this 'gainst thee I've sinned.
These three gods are they that govern—these three worlds, so let them speak;
This my sacred truth attest they—or this day abandon me."

Thus adjured, a solemn witness—spake the wind from out the air;
"She hath done or thought no evil,—Nala, 'tis the truth we speak:
King, the treasure of her virtue—well hath Damayanti kept,
We ourselves have seen and watched her—closely for three livelong years.
This her subtle wile she plotted—only for thy absent sake,
For beside thyself no mortal might a hundred Yojans drive.
Thou hast met with Bhima's daughter,—Bhima's daughter meets with thee,
Cast away all jealous scruple;—to thy bosom take thy wife."

Even as thus the wind was speaking,—flowers fell showering all around:
And the gods sweet music sounded—on the zephyr floating light.
As on this surpassing wonder—royal Nala stood and gazed,
Of the blameless Damayanti—melted all his jealous doubts.
Then by dust all undefiled—he the heavenly vest put on,
Thought upon the King of Serpents,—and his proper form resumed.
In his own proud form her husband—Bhima's royal daughter saw,
Loud she shrieked, the undespised,—and embraced the king of men.
Bhima's daughter, too, king Nala,—shining glorious as of old,
Clasped unto his heart, and fondled—gently that sweet infant pair.
Then her face upon his bosom—as the lovely princess laid,
In her calm and gentle sorrow—softly sighed the long-eyed queen:
He, that form still mire-defiled—as he clasped with smile serene,
Long the king of men stood silent—in the ecstasy of woe.
All the tale of Damayanti—and of Nala all the tale,
To king Bhima in her transport—told Vidarbha's mother-queen.
Then replied that mighty monarch—"Nala, his ablutions done,
Thus re-joined to Damayanti,—I to-morrow will behold."

They the livelong night together—slow related, each to each,
All their wanderings in the forest—and each wild adventure strange.
In king Bhima's royal palace—studying each the other's bliss,
With glad hearts, Vidarbha's princess—and the kingly Nala dwelt.
In their fourth year of divorcement—reunited to his wife,
Richly fraught with every blessing,—at the height of joy he stood.
Damayanti too re-wedded,—still increasing in her bliss,
Like as the glad earth to water—opens its half-budding fruits,
She of weariness unconscious,—soothed each grief, and full each joy,
Every wish fulfilled, shone brightly,—as the night, when high the moon.

BOOK XXV.

When that night was passed and over—Nala, that high-gifted king,
Wedded to Vidarbha's daughter—in fit hour her sire beheld.
Humbly Nala paid his homage—to the father of his queen,
Reverently did Damayanti—pay her homage to her sire.
Him received the royal Bhima—as his son, with highest joy,
Honoured, as became him, nobly :—then consoled that monarch wise
Damayanti, to king Nala—reconciled, the faithful wife.
Royal Nala, all these honours,—as his homage meet, received ;
And in fitting terms devotion—to his royal sire declared.
Mighty then, through all the city—ran the wakening sound of joy ;
All in every street exulting—at king Nala's safe return.
All the city with their banners,—and with garlands decked they forth.
All the royal streets, well watered,—and with stainless flowers were strewn ;
And from door to door the garlands—of festooning flowers were hung ;
And of all the gods the altars—were with fitting rites adorned.
Rituparna heard of Nala—in the form of Vahuca,
Now re-wed to Damayanti,—and the king of men rejoiced.
To the king before his presence—Nala courteous made excuse,
In his turn Ayodhya's monarch—in like courteous language spake.
He, received thus hospitably,—wondering to Nishadha's king,

" Bliss be with thee, reunited—to thy queen :" 'twas thus he said.
" Have I aught offensive ever—done to thee, or said, O king,
Whilst unknown, within my palace—thou wert dwelling, king of men?
If designed or undesigning—any single act I've done
I might wish undone, thy pardon—grant me, I beseech thee, king."

NALA *spake.*

" Not or deed or word discourteous,—not the slightest hast thou done;
Hadst thou, I might not resent it,—freely would I pardon all.
Thou of old, my friend, my kinsman—wert, O sovereign of men,
From this time henceforth thy friendship—be my glory and my joy.
Every wish anticipated,—pleasantly I dwelt with thee,
As in mine own royal palace—dwelt I ever, king, in thine.
My surpassing skill in horses,—all is thine that I possess ;
That on thee bestow I gladly—if, O king, it seem thee good."
Nala thus to Rituparna—gave his subtle skill in steeds,
Gladly he received the present—with each regulation meet.
Gifted with that precious knowledge,—then Bhángásuri the king
Home returned to his own city—with another charioteer.
Rituparna thus departed,—Nala then, the king of men,
In the city of Kundina—sojourned for no length of time.

BOOK XXVI.

THERE a month when he had sojourned—of king Bhima taking leave,
Guarded but by few attendants,—to Nishadha took his way.
With a single splendid chariot—and with elephants sixteen,
And with fifty armed horsemen,—and six hundred men on foot ;
Making, as 'twere, earth to tremble,—hastening onward, did the king
Enter awful in his anger—and terrific in his speed.
Then the son of Virasena—to king Pushkara drew near ;
" Play we once again," then said he,—" much the wealth I have ac-
All I have, even Damayanti,—every treasure I possess, [quired :
Set I now upon the hazard,—Pushkara, thy kingdom thou :

In the game once more contend we,—'tis my settled purpose this,
Brother, at a single hazard—play we boldly for our lives.
From another he who treasures,—he who mighty realm hath won,
'Tis esteemed a bounden duty—to play back the counter game.
If thou shrinkest from the hazard,—be our game the strife of swords,
Meet we in the single combat,—all our difference to decide.
An hereditary kingdom—may by any means be sought,
Be re-won by any venture,—this the maxim of the wise.
Of two courses set before thee,—Pushkara, the option make,
Or in play to stand the hazard,—or in battle stretch the bow."
By Nishadha's lord thus challenged,—Pushkara, with smile suppressed,
As secure of easy victory,—answered to the lord of earth :
" Oh what joy ! abundant treasures—thou hast won, again to play ;
Oh what joy ! of Damayanti—now the hard-won prize is mine :
Oh what joy ! again thou livest—with thy consort, mighty armed !
With the wealth I win bedecked—soon shall Bhima's daughter stand,
By my side, as by great Indra—stands the Apsara in heaven.
Still on thee hath dwelt my memory,—still I've waited, king, for thee ;
In the play I find no rapture—but 'gainst kinsmen like thyself.
When this day the round-limbed princess,—Damayanti, undespised,
I shall win, I rest contented,—still within mine heart she dwells."

Hearing his contemptuous language—franticly thus pouring forth,
With his sword th' indignant Nala—fain had severed off his head.
But with haughty smile, with anger—glaring in his blood-red eyes,
" Play we now, nor talk we longer,—conquered, thou'lt no longer talk."
Then of Pushkara the gaming—and of Nala straight began :
In a single throw by Nala—was the perilous venture gained ;
Pushkara, his gold, his jewels,—at one hazard all was won !
Pushkara, in play thus conquered,—with a smile the king rejoined :
" Mine again is all this kingdom—undisturbed, its foes o'ercome.
Fallen king ! Vidarbha's daughter—by thine eyes may ne'er be seen.
Thou art now, with all thy household,—unto abject slavery sunk.
Not thyself achieved the conquest—that subdued me heretofore !
'Twas achieved by mightier Kali,—that thou didst not, fool, perceive.

Yet my wrath, by him enkindled,—will I not 'gainst thee direct;
Live thou henceforth at thy pleasure,—freely I thy life bestow,
And of thine estate and substance—give I thee thy fitting share.
Such my pleasure, in thy welfare,—hero, do I take delight,
And mine unabated friendship—never shall from thee depart.
Pushkara, thou art my brother,—may'st thou live a hundred years!"

Nala thus consoled his brother—in his conscious power and strength,
Sent him home to his own city—once embracing, once again.
Pushkara, thus finding comfort,—answered to Nishadha's lord,
Answered he to Punyasloka,—bowing low with folded hands:
"Everlasting be thy glory! may'st thou live ten thousand years!
That my life to me thou grantest,—and a city for mine home!"

Hospitably entertained—there a month when he had dwelt,
Joyful to his own proud city—Pushkara, with all his kin,
With a well-appointed army,—of attendant slaves an host,
Shining like the sun departed,—in his full meridian orb.

Pushkara thus crowned with riches,—thus unharmed, when he dismissed,
Entered then his royal city—with surpassing pomp, the king:
As he entered, to his subjects—Nala spake the words of peace.
From the city, from the country—all, with hair erect with joy,
Came, with folded hands addressed him,—and the councillors of state.
"Happy are we now, O monarch,—in the city, in the fields,
Setting forth to do thee homage,—as to Indra all the gods."

Then at peace the tranquil city,—the first festal gladness o'er,
With a mighty host escorted—Damayanti brought he home.
Damayanti rich in treasures,—in her father's blessings rich,
Glad dismissed the mighty-minded—Bhima, fearful in his strength.
With the daughter of Vidarbha,—with his children in his joy,
Nala lived, as lives the sovereign—of the gods in Nandana.
Re-ascended thus to glory—he, among the kings of earth,
Ruled his realm in Jambudwipa,—thus re-won, with highest fame;
And all holy rites performed he—with devout munificence.

THE DEATH OF YAJNADATTA.

This extract from the Ramayana has been edited by M. Chézy, with a free translation into French prose by M. Bournouf, a literal version into Latin, and a grammatical commentary and notes by the editor.

Through the arts of one of his wives Kaikéyí, to whom he had made an incautious vow to grant her demand, Dasaratha is obliged to send his victorious son Rama into banishment at the very moment of his marriage with the beautiful Sita. Rama is accompanied in his exile by Lakshmana. The following episode describes the misery and distress of the father, deprived of his favourite son.

Scarce Rama to the wilderness—had with his younger brother gone,
Abandoned to his deep distress,—king Dasaratha sate alone.
Upon his sons to exile driven—when thought that king, as Indra bright,
Darkness came o'er him, as in heaven—when pales th' eclipsed sun his light.
Six days he sate, and mourned and pined—for Rama all that weary time,
At midnight on his wandering mind—rose up his old forgotten crime.
His queen Kausalya, the divine—addressed he, as she rested near:
"Kausalya, if thou wakest, incline—to thy lord's speech thy ready ear.
Whatever deed, or good or ill,—by man, oh blessed queen, is wrought,
Its proper fruit he gathers still—by time to slow perfection brought.
He who the opposing counsel's weight—compares not in his judgment
Or misery or bliss his fate,—among the sage is deemed a fool. [cool,
As one that quits the Amra bower—the bright Palasa's pride to gain,
Mocked by the promise of its flower,—seeks its unripening fruit in vain.
So I the lovely Amra left—for the Palasa's barren bloom,
Through mine own fatal error 'reft—of banished Rama, mourn in gloom.

Kausalya! in my early youth—by my keen arrow at its mark,
Aimed with too sure and deadly truth,—was wrought a deed most fell and dark.
At length the evil that I did—hath fallen upon my fated head,
As when on subtle poison hid—an unsuspecting child hath fed;
Even as that child unwittingly—hath made the poisonous fare his food,
Even so in ignorance by me—was wrought that deed of guilt and blood.
Unwed wert thou in virgin bloom,—and I in youth's delicious prime,
The season of the rains had come,—that soft and love-enkindling time.
Earth's moisture all absorbed, the sun—through all the world its warmth had spread, [the dead!
Turned from the north, its course begun,—where haunt the spirits of
Gathering o'er all th' horizon's bound—on high the welcome clouds appeared, [veered.
Exulting all the birds flew round,—cranes, cuckoos, peacocks, flew and
And all down each wide-water'd shore—the troubled, yet still limpid floods,
Over their banks began to pour,—as o'er them hung the bursting clouds.
And, saturate with cloud-born dew,—the glittering verdant-mantled earth,
The cuckoos and the peacocks flew,—disputing as in drunken mirth.
In such a time, so soft, so bland,—oh beautiful! I chanced to go,
With quiver, and with bow in hand,—where clear Sarayu's waters flow.
If haply to the river's brink—at night the buffalo might stray,
Or elephant, the stream to drink,—intent my savage game to slay,
Then of a water cruise, as slow—it filled, the gurgling sound I heard,
Nought saw I, but the sullen low—of elephant that sound appeared.
The swift well-feathered arrow I—upon the bowstring fitting straight,
Toward the sound the shaft let fly,—ah, cruelly deceived by fate!
The winged arrow scarce had flown,—and scarce had reached its destined aim,
'Ah me, I'm slain,' a feeble moan—in trembling human accents came.
'Ah whence hath come this fatal shaft—against a poor recluse like me,
Who shot that bolt with deadly craft,—alas! what cruel man is he?

At the lone midnight had I come—to draw the river's limpid flood,
And here am struck to death, by whom?—ah whose this wrongful deed of blood?
Alas! and in my parent's heart,—the old, the blind, and hardly fed,
In the wild wood, hath pierced the dart,—that here hath struck their offspring dead.
Ah, deed most profitless as worst,—a deed of wanton useless guilt;
As though a pupil's hand accurs'd—his holy master's blood had spilt.
But not mine own untimely fate,—it is not that which I deplore.
My blind, my aged parents' state,—'tis their distress afflicts me more.
That sightless pair, for many a day,—from me their scanty food have earned,
What lot is theirs, when I'm away,—to the five elements returned?
Alike all wretched they, as I,—ah, whose this triple deed of blood?
For who the herbs will now supply,—the roots, the fruit, their blameless food?' [low,
My troubled soul, that plaintive moan—no sooner heard, so faint and
Trembled to look on what I'd done,—fell from my shuddering hand my bow. [stream beside,
Swift I rushed up, I saw him there—heart-pierced, and fallen the
That hermit-boy with knotted hair,—his clothing was the black deer's hide. [respire,
On me most piteous turned his look,—his wounded breast could scarce
And these the words, oh queen, he spoke,—as to consume me in his ire:
'What wrong, oh Kshatriya, have I done,—to be thy deathful arrow's
The forest's solitary son—to draw the limpid stream I came. [aim,
Both wretched and both blind they lie,—in the wild wood all destitute,
My parents, listening anxiously—to hear my home-returning foot.
By this, thy fatal shaft, this one,—three miserable victims fall,
The sire, the mother, and the son,—ah why? and unoffending all.
How vain my father's life austere,—the Veda's studied page how vain,
He knew not with prophetic fear—his son would fall untimely slain.
But had he known, to one as he—so weak, so blind, 'twere bootless all,
No tree can save another tree—by the sharp hatchet marked to fall.

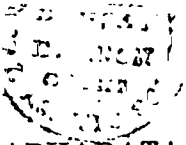
But to my father's dwelling haste,—oh Raghu's son, lest in his ire
Thy head with burning curse he blast,—as the dry forest tree the fire.
Thee to my father's lone retreat—will quickly lead yon onward path,
Oh haste, his pardon to entreat,—or ere he curse thee in his wrath.
Yet first, that gently I may die,—draw forth the barbed steel from hence,
Allay thy fears, no Brahmin I,—not thine of Brahmin blood the offence.
My sire, a Brahmin hermit he,—my mother was of Sudra race.'
So spake the wounded boy, on me—while turned his unreproaching face.
As from his palpitating breast—I gently drew the mortal dart,
He saw me trembling stand, and blest—that boy's pure spirit seemed to part.
As died that holy hermit's son,—from me my glory seemed to go,
With troubled mind I stood, cast down—t' inevitable endless woe.
That shaft that seemed his life to burn—like serpent venom, thus drawn out,
I, taking up his fallen urn,—t' his father's dwelling took my route.
There miserable, blind, and old,—of their sole helpmate thus forlorn,
His parents did these eyes behold,—like two sad birds with pinions shorn.
Of him in fond discourse they sate—lone, thinking only of their son,
For his return so long, so late,—impatient, oh by me undone.
My footsteps' sound he seemed to know—and thus the aged hermit said,
'Oh, Yajnadatta, why so slow?—haste, let the cooling draught be shed.
Long on the river's pleasant brink—hast thou been sporting in thy joy.
Thy mother's fainting spirits sink—in fear for thee; but thou, my boy,
If aught to grieve thy gentle heart—thy mother or thy sire do wrong,
Bear with us, nor, when next we part,—on the slow way thus linger long,
The feet of those that cannot move,—of those that cannot see the eye,
Our spirits live but in thy love,—oh wherefore, dearest, no reply?'
"My throat thick swollen with bursting tears,—my power of speech that seemed to choke, [spoke:
With hands above my head, my fears—breaking my quivering voice, I
'The Kshatriya Dasaratha I,—oh hermit sage, 'tis not thy son!
Most holy ones, unknowingly—a deed of awful guilt I've done.

With bow in hand I took my way—along Sarayu's pleasant brink,
The savage buffalo to slay,—or elephant come down to drink.
A sound came murmuring to my ear,—'twas of the urn that slowly filled,
I deemed some savage wild-beast near,—my erring shaft thy son had killed. [keen:
A feeble groan I heard, his breast—was pierced by that dire arrow
All trembling to the spot I pressed,—lo there thy hermit boy was seen.
Flew to the sound my arrow, meant—the wandering elephant to slay,
Toward the river brink it went,—and there thy son expiring lay.
The fatal shaft when forth I drew,—to heaven his parting spirit soared,
Dying he only thought of you,—long, long, your lonely lot deplored.
Thus ignorantly did I slay—your child beloved, oh hermit sage!
Turn thou on me, whose fated day,—is come, thy all-consuming rage.'
He heard my dreadful tale at length,—he stood all lifeless, motionless;
Then deep he groaned, and gathering strength—me the meek suppliant did address. [rehearse,
'Kshatriya, 'tis well that thou hast turned—thy deed of murder to
Else over all thy land had burned—the fire of my wide-wasting curse.
If with premeditated crime—the unoffending blood thou'dst spilt,
The Thunderer on his throne sublime—had shaken at such tremendous guilt. [accursed,
Against the anchorite's sacred head—hadst, knowing, aimed thy shaft
In th' holy Vedas deeply read,—thy skull in seven wide rents had burst.
But since, unwitting, thou hast wrought—that deed of death, thou livest still,
Oh son of Raghu, from thy thought—dismiss all dread of instant ill.
Oh lead me to that doleful spot—where my poor boy expiring lay,
Beneath the shaft thy fell hand shot,—of my blind age the staff the stay.
On the cold earth 'twere yet a joy—to touch my perished child again,
(So long if I may live) my boy—in one last fond embrace to strain.
His body all bedewed with gore,—his locks in loose disorder thrown,
Let me, let her but touch once more,—to the dread realm of Yama gone.'
Then to that fatal place I brought—alone that miserable pair; [there.
His sightless hands, and hers I taught—to touch their boy that slumbered

Nor sooner did they feel him lie,—on the moist herbage coldly thrown,
Both with a shrill and feeble cry—upon the body cast them down.
The mother as she lay and groaned,—addressed her boy with quivering tongue, [young:
And like a heifer sadly moaned,—just plundered of her new-dropped
'Was not thy mother once, my son,—than life itself more dear to thee?
Why the long way hast thou begun,—without one gentle word to me.
One last embrace, and then, beloved,—upon thy lonely journey go!
Alas! with anger art thou moved,—that not a word thou wilt bestow?'
"The miserable father now—with gentle touch each cold limb pressed,
And to the dead his words of woe,—as to his living son, addressed:
'I too, my son, am I not here?—thy sire with thy sad mother stands;
Awake, arise, my child, draw near,—and clasp each neck with loving hands. [heard?
Who now, 'neath the dark wood by night—a pious reader shall be
Whose honied voice my ear delight—with th' holy Veda's living word?
The evening prayer, th' ablution done,—the fire adored with worship meet, [feet?
Who now shall soothe like thee, my son,—with fondling hand, my aged
And who the herb, the wholesome root,—or wild fruit from the wood shall bring?
To us the blind, the destitute,—with helpless hunger perishing? [lone,
Thy blind old mother, heaven-resigned,—within our hermit-dwelling
How shall I tend, myself as blind,—now all my strength of life is gone!
Oh stay, my child, oh part not yet,—to Yama's dwelling go not now,
To-morrow forth we all will set,—thy mother, and myself, and thou:
For both, in grief for thee, and both—so helpless, ere another day,
From this dark world, but little loath—shall we depart, death's easy prey!
And I myself, by Yama's seat—companion of thy darksome way,
The guerdon to thy virtues meet—from that great Judge of men will pray.
Because, my boy, in innocence,—by wicked deed thou hast been slain,
Rise, where the heroes dwell, who thence—ne'er stoop to this dark world again."

Those that to earth return no more—the sense-subdued, the hermits wise,
Priests their sage masters that adore,—to their eternal seats arise.
Those that have studied to the last—the Veda's, the Vedanga's page,
Where saintly kings of earth have passed,—Nahusa and Yayáti sage;
The sires of holy families,—the true to wedlock's sacred vow;
And those that cattle, gold, or rice,—or lands, with liberal hands bestow;
That ope th' asylum to th' oppressed,—that ever love, and speak the truth; [youth.
Up to the dwellings of the blest—th' eternal, soar thou, best loved
For none of such a holy race—within the lowest seat may dwell;
But that will be his fatal place—by whom my only offspring fell.'
" So groaning deep, that wretched pair—the hermit and his wife, essayed
The meet ablution to prepare,—their hands their last faint effort made.
Divine, with glorious body bright—in splendid car of heaven elate,
Before them stood their son in light,—and thus consoled their helpless state: [of joy;
' Meed of my duteous filial care—I've reached the wished for realms
And ye, in those glad realms, prepare—to meet full soon your dear-loved boy.
My parents, weep no more for me,—yon warrior monarch slew me not,
My death was thus ordained to be,—predestined was the shaft he shot.'
Thus, as he spoke, the anchorite's son—soared up the glowing heaven afar,
In air his heavenly body shone,—while stood he in his gorgeous car.
But they, of that lost boy so dear—the last ablution meetly made,
Thus spoke to me that holy seer,—with folded hands above his head.
' Albeit by thy unknowing dart—my blameless boy untimely fell,
A curse I lay upon thy heart,—whose fearful pain I know too well.
As sorrowing for my son I bow,—and yield up my unwilling breath,
So, sorrowing for thy son shalt thou—at life's last close repose in death.'
That curse, dread sounding in mine ear,—to mine own city forth I set,
Nor long survived that hermit seer,—to mourn his child in lone regret.

This day that Brahmin curse fulfilled—hath fallen on my devoted head,
In anguish for my parted child—have all my sinking spirits fled.
No more my darkened eyes can see,—my clouded memory is o'ercast,
Dark Yama's heralds summon me—to his deep, dreary, realm to haste.
Mine eye no more my Rama sees,—and grief-o'erborne, my spirits sink,
As the swoln stream sweeps down the trees—that grow upon the crumbling brink.
Oh, felt I Rama's touch, or spake—one word his home-returning voice,
Again to life should I awake,—as quaffing nectar draughts, rejoice,
But what so sad could e'er have been,—celestial partner of my heart,
As, Rama's beauteous face unseen,—from life untimely to depart?
His exile in the forest o'er,—him home returned to Oude's high town,
Oh happy those, that see once more,—like Indra from the sky come down.
No mortal men, but gods I deem,—moonlike, before whose wondering sight [bright.
My Rama's glorious face shall beam—from the dark forest bursting
Happy that gaze on Rama's face—with beauteous teeth and smile of love,
Like the blue lotus in its grace,—and like the starry king above.
Like to the full autumnal moon,—and like the lotus in its bloom,
That youth who sees returning soon,—how blest shall be that mortal's doom."
Dwelling on that sweet memory,—on his last bed the monarch lay,
And slowly, softly, seemed to die,—as fades the moon at dawn away.
"Ah, Rama! ah, my son!" thus said,—or scarcely said, the king of men,
His gentle hapless spirit fled—in sorrow for his Rama then,
The shepherd of his people old—at midnight on his bed of death,
The tale of his son's exile told—and breathed away his dying breath.



EXTRACTS FROM THE MAHABHARATA.

THE BRAHMIN'S LAMENT.

THE hostility of the kindred races of Pandu and Kuru forms one of the great circles of Indian fable. It fills great part of the immense poem, the Mahabhárata. At this period the five sons of Pandu and their mother Kunti have been driven into the wilderness from the court of their uncle Dritarashtra at Nágapur. The brothers, during their residence in the forest, have an encounter with a terrible giant, Hidimba, the prototype of the Cyclops of Homer, and of the whole race of those giants of Northern origin, who, after amusing our ancestors, children of larger growth, descended to our nurseries, from whence they are now well-nigh exploded. After this adventure the brothers take up their residence in the city of Ekachara, where they are hospitably received in the house of a Brahmin. The neighbourhood of this city is haunted by another terrible giant, Baka, whose cannibal appetite has been glutted by a succession of meaner victims. It is now come to the Brahmin's turn to furnish the fatal banquet; they overhear the following complaint of their host, whose family, consisting of himself, his wife, a grown-up daughter, and a son, a little child, must surrender one to become the horrible repast of the monster. In turn, the father, the mother, in what may be fairly called three singularly pathetic Indian elegies, enforce each their claim to the privilege of suffering for the rest.

ALAS for life, so vain, so weary,—in this changing world below,
Ever-teeming root of sorrow,—still dependent, full of woe!
Still to life clings strong affliction,—life that's one long suffering all,
Whoso lives must bear his sorrow,—soon or late that must befal.

Oh to find a place of refuge—in this dire extremity,
For my wife, my son, my daughter,—and myself what hope may be!

Oft I've said to thee, my dearest,—Priestess, that thou knowest well,
But my word thou never heededst,—let us go where peace may dwell.
"Here I had my birth, my nurture,—still my sire is living here;
Oh unwise!" 'twas thus thou answeredst—to my oft-repeated prayer.
Thine old father went to heaven,—slept thy mother by his side,
Then thy near and dear relations,—why delight'st thou here t' abide?
Fondly loving still thy kindred,—thine old home thou would'st not leave,
Of thy kindred death deprived thee,—in thy griefs I could but grieve.
Now to me is death approaching,—never victim will I give,
From mine house, like some base craven,—and myself consent to live.
Thee with righteous soul, the gentle,—ever like a mother deemed,
A sweet friend the gods have given me,—aye my choicest wealth esteem'd.
From thy parents thee, consenting,—mistress of my house I took,
Thee I chose, and thee I honoured,—as enjoins the holy book.
Thou the high-born, thou the virtuous!—my dear children's mother
Only to prolong my being—thee the good, the blameless, now, [thou,
Can I to thy death surrender—mine own true, my faithful wife?
Yet my son can I abandon—in his early bloom of life,
Offer him in his sweet childhood—with no down his cheek to shade?
Her, whom Brahma, the all-bounteous,—for a lovely bride hath made,
Mother of a race of heroes,—a heaven-winning race, may make;
Of myself begot, the virgin,—could I ever her forsake? [moved,
Towards a son the hearts of fathers,—some have thought, are deepest
Others deem the daughter dearer,—both alike I've ever loved:
She that sons, that heaven hath in her,—sons whose offerings heaven may win,
Can I render up my daughter,—blameless, undefiled by sin?
If myself I offer, sorrow—in the next world my lot must be,
Hardly then could live my children,—and my wife bereft of me.
One of these so dear to offer—to the wise, were sin, were shame,
Yet without me they must perish,—how to 'scape the sin, the blame!
Woe! oh woe! where find I refuge—for myself, for mine, oh where!
Better 'twere to die together,—for to live I cannot bear.

The BRAHMIN'S WIFE *speaks.*

As of lowly caste, my husband,—yield not thus thy soul to woe,
This is not a time for wailing,—who the Vedas knows must know:
Fate inevitable orders,—all must yield to death in turn,
Hence the doom, th' irrevocable—it beseems not thee to mourn.
Man hath wife, and son, and daughter—for the joy of his own heart,
Wherefore wisely check thy sorrow,—it is I must hence depart.
'Tis the wife's most holy duty,—law on earth without repeal,
That her life she offer freely,—when demands her husband's weal.
And e'en now, a deed so noble—hath its meed of pride and bliss,
In the next world life eternal—and unending fame in this.
'Tis a high, yet certain duty—that my life I thus resign,
'Tis thy right, as thy advantage,—both the willing deed enjoin—
All for which a wife is wedded,—long ere now through me thou'st won,
Blooming son and gentle daughter,—that my debt is paid and done.
Thou may'st well support our children,—gently guard, when I am gone,
I shall have no power to guard them,—nor support them, left alone.
Oh, despoiled of thy assistance,—lord of me, and all I have,
How these little ones from ruin,—how my hapless self to save:
Widow'd, reft of thee, and helpless,—with two children in their youth,
How maintain my son, and daughter—in the path of right and truth.
From the lustful, from the haughty—how shall I our child protect,
When they seek thy blameless daughter,—by a father's awe unchecked
As the birds in numbers swarming—gather o'er the earth-strewn corn,
Thus the men round some sad widow—of her noble lord forlorn.
Thus by all the rude and reckless—with profane desires pursued,
How shall I the path still follow—loved and honoured by the good?
This thy dear, thy only daughter,—this pure maiden innocent,
How to teach the way of goodness—where her sire, her fathers went?
How can I instil the virtues—in the bosom of our child,
Helpless and beset on all sides,—as thou wouldst, in duty skilled?
Round thy unprotected daughter,—Sudras like to holy lore,
Scorning me in their wild passion,—will unworthy suitors pour.

And if I refuse to give her,—mindful of thy virtuous course,
As the storks the rice of offering,—they will bear her off by force.
Should I see my son degenerate,—like his noble sire no more,
In the power of the unworthy—the sweet daughter that I bore ;
And myself, the world's scorn, wandering,—so as scarce myself to know,
Of proud men the scoff, the outcast,—I should die of shame and woe.
And bereft of me, my children,—and without thy aid to cherish,
As the fish when water fails them,—both would miserably perish.
Thus of all the three is ruin—the inevitable lot,
Desolate of thee, their guardian,—wherefore, Oh, forsake us not !

The dark way before her husband—'tis a wife's first bliss to go,
'Tis a wife's that hath borne children,—this the wise, the holy know.
For thee forsaken be my daughter,—let my son forsaken be,
I for thee forsook my kindred,—and forsake my life for thee.
More than offering 'tis, than penance,—liberal gift or sacrifice,
When a wife, thus clearly summoned,—for her husband's welfare dies.
That which now to do I hasten,—all the highest duty feel,
For thy bliss, for thy well-doing,—thine and all thy race's weal.
Men, they say, but pray for children,—riches, or a generous friend,
To assist them in misfortune,—and a wife for the same end.
The whole race (the wise declare it)—thou the increaser of thy race!
Than the single self less precious—ever holds a second place.
Let me then discharge the duty—and preserve thyself by me.
Give me thine assent, all-honoured !—and my children's guardian be.
Women must be spared from slaughter,—this the learn'd in duty say,
Even the giant knows that duty,—me he will not dare to slay.
Of the man the death is certain,—of the woman yet in doubt,
Wherefore, noblest, on the instant,—as the victim, send me out.
I have lived with many blessings,—I have well fulfilled my part,
I have given thee beauteous offspring,—death hath nought t' appal mine heart.
I've borne children, I am aged,—in my soul I've all revolved,
And with spirit strong to serve thee—I am steadfast and resolved.
Offering me, all-honoured husband,—thou another wife wilt find,
And to her wilt do thy duty,—gentle as to me, and kind.

Many wives if he espouses,—man incurs nor sin nor blame,
For a wife to wed another,—'tis inexpiable shame.
This well weighed within thy spirit,—and the sin thyself to die,
Save thyself, thy race, thy children,—be the single victim I.

Hearing thus his wife, the husband—fondly clasp'd her to his breast,
And their tears they poured together,—by their mutual grief oppressed.

THIRD SONG.

Of these two the troubled language—in the chamber as she heard,
Lost herself in grief, the daughter—thus took up the doleful word.

The DAUGHTER *spake.*

Why to sorrow thus abandoned?—weep not thus, as all forlorn,
Hear ye now my speech, my parents,—and your sorrows may be borne.
Me with right ye may abandon,—none that right in doubt will call,
Yield up her that best is yielded,—I alone may save you all.
Wherefore wishes man for children?—"they in need mine help will be:"
Lo, the time is come, my parents,—in your need find help in me.
Ever here the son by offering,—or hereafter, doth atone,
Either way is he th' atoner,—hence the wise have named him son.
Daughters too, the great forefathers—of a noble race desire,
And I now shall prove their wisdom,—saving thus from death my sire.
Lo, my brother but an infant!—to the other world goest thou,
In a little time we perish,—who may dare to question how?
But if first depart to heaven—he that after me was born,
Cease our race's sacred offerings,—our offended sires would mourn.
Without father, without mother,—of my brother too bereft,
I shall die, unused to sorrow,—yet to deepest sorrow left.
But thyself, my sire! my mother,—and my gentle brother save,
And their meet, unfailing offerings—shall our fathers' spirits have.
A second self the son, a friend the wife,—the daughter's but a grief,
From thy grief, thy daughter offering,—thou of right wilt find relief.
Desolate and unprotected,—ever wandering here and there,
Shall I quickly be, my father!—reft of thy paternal care!

But wert thou through me, my father !—and thy race from peril freed,
Noble fruit should I have borne thee,—having done this single deed.
But if thou from hencê departing—leav'st me, noblest, to my fate,
Down I sink to bitterest misery,—save, oh save me from that state!
For mine own sake, and for virtue's,—for our noble race's sake,
Yield up her who best is yielded,—me thine own life's ransom make.
Instantly this step, the only—the inevitable take.
Hath the world a fate more wretched,—than when thou to heaven art
Like a dog to wander begging,—and subsist on others' bread ? [fled,
But my father thus preserving,—thus preserving all that's thine,
I shall then become immortal,—and partake of bliss divine,
And the gods, and our forefathers,—all will hail the prudent choice,
Still will have the water offerings,—that their holy spirits rejoice.

As they heard her lamentation—in their troubled anguish deep,
Wept the father, wept the mother,—'gan the daughter too to weep.
Then the little son beheld them,—and their doleful moan he heard ;
And with both his eyes wide open—lisped he thus his broken word.
" Weep not, father, weep not, mother,—oh my sister, weep not so !"
First to one, and then to th' other—smiling went he to and fro.
Then a blade of spear-grass lifting—thus in bolder glee he said,
" With this spear-grass will I kill him,—this man-eating giant dead."
Though o'erpowered by bitterest sorrow—as they heard their prattling
Stole into the parents' bosoms—mute and inexpressive joy. [boy,

THE DELUGE.

The following extract from the Mahábhárata was published by Bopp, with a German translation, (the promised Latin version has not yet reached this country,) with four other extracts from the same poem. It is inserted here not on account of its poetical merit, but on account of the interest of the subject. It is the genuine, and probably the earliest, version of the Indian tradition of the Flood. The author has made the following observations on this subject in the Quarterly Review, which he ventures here to transcribe.

Nothing has thrown so much discredit on oriental studies, particularly on the valuable Asiatic Researches, as the fixed determination to find the whole of the Mosaic history in the remoter regions of the East. It was not to be expected that, when the new world of oriental literature was suddenly disclosed, the first attempts to explore it would be always guided by cool or dispassionate criticism. Even Sir W. Jones was led away, at times, by the ardour of his imagination; and the gorgeous palaces of the Mahabadian dynasty, which were built on the authority of the Desatir and the Dabistan, and thrown upward into an age anterior even to the earliest Indian civilisation, have melted away, and "left not a wreck behind," before the cooler and more profound investigations of Mr. Erskine *. Sir W. Jones was succeeded by Wilford, a man of most excursive imagination, bred in the school of Bryant, who, even if he had himself been more deeply versed in the ancient language, would have been an unsafe guide. But Wilford, it is well known, unfortunately betrayed to the crafty and mercenary pundits whom he employed the objects which he hoped to find; and these unscrupulous interpreters, unwilling to disappoint their employer, had little difficulty in discovering, or forging, or interpolating, whatever might suit his purpose. The honest candour with which Wilford, a man of the strictest integrity, made the open and humiliating confession of the deceptions which had been practised upon him, ought for ever to preserve his memory from disrespect. The fictions to which he had given currency only retained, and still we are ashamed to say retain, their ground in histories of the Bible and works of a

* See the very valuable papers of this gentleman in the Bombay Transactions.

certain school of theology, from which no criticism can exorcise an error once established: still, however, with sensible men, a kind of suspicion was thrown over the study itself; and the cool and sagacious researches of men, probably better acquainted with their own language than some of the Brahmins themselves, were implicated in the fate of the fantastic and, though profoundly learned, ever injudicious reveries of Wilford.

Now, however, that we may depend on the genuineness of our documents, it is curious to examine the Indian version or versions of the universal tradition of the Deluge; for, besides this extract from the Mahábhárata, Sir W. Jones had extracted from the Bhagavata Purana another and, in some respects, very different legend. Both of these versions are strongly impregnated with the mythological extravagance of India, but the Purana, one of the Talmudic books of Indian tradition, as M. Bopp observes, is evidently of a much later date than the ruder and simpler fable of the old Epic. It belongs to a less ancient school of poetry, and a less ancient system of religion. While it is much more exuberant in its fiction, it nevertheless betrays a sort of apprehension lest it shall shock the less easy faith of a more incredulous reader; it is manifestly from the religious school of the followers of Vishnu, and, indeed, seems to have some reference to one of the philosophic systems. Yet the outline of the story is the same. In the Mahábháratic version, Manu, like Noah, stands alone in an age of universal depravity. His virtues, however, are of the Indian cast—the most severe and excruciating penances by which he extorts, as it were, the favour of the deity *.

VIVASWATA'S son, a raja,—and a sage of mighty fame,
King of men, the first great fathers—in his glory equalled he,
In his might and kingly power,—Manu, and in earthly bliss,
And in wonder-working penance—sire and grandsire far surpassed.
With his arms on high out-stretching—wrought the sovereign of men,
Steadily on one foot standing,—penance rigorous and dread, [eyes,
With his downward head low-drooping,—with his fixed, unwavering
Dreed he thus his awful penance—many a long and weary year.

To the penitent with tresses—streaming loose, and wet, and long,
By the margin of Wirini,—thus the fish began to speak:

* The editor remarks, that the name Manuja, Man-born, as the appellative of the human race, is derived from Manu, as likewise Mánawas, *masc.* Man—Manawi, *fem.* Woman: from thence the Gothic *Mann*, which we have preserved. Manu is thus the representative of Man.

" Blessed ! lo, the least of fishes—of the mighty fish in dread,
Wilt thou not from death preserve me,—thou that all thy vows fulfill'st:
Since the strongest of the fishes—persecute the weaker still,
Over us impends for ever—our inevitable fate.
Ere I sink, if thou wilt free me—from th' extremity of dread,
Meet return can I compensate—when the holy deed is done."
Speaking thus the fish when heard he—full of pity all his heart,
In his hand that fish king Manu,—son of Vivaswata, took.
Brought the son of Vivaswata—to the river shore the fish,
Cast it in a crystal vessel,—like the moonshine clear and bright.
Rapid grew that fish, O raja !—tended with such duteous care,
Cleaved to him the heart of Manu,—as to a beloved son.
Time rolled on, and larger, larger—ever waxed that wondrous fish.
Nor within that crystal vessel—found he longer space to move.
Spake again the fish to Manu,—as he saw him, thus he spake :
" O all prosperous ! O all gentle !—bring me to another place."
Then the fish from out the vessel—blessed Manu took again ;
And with gentle speed he bare him,—Manu, to a spacious lake.
There the conqueror of cities,—mighty Manu, cast him in.
Still he grew, that fish so wondrous—many a circling round of years.
Three miles long that lake expanded—and a single mile its breadth,
Yet that fish with eyes like lotus—there no longer might endure ;
Nor, O sovereign of the Vaisyas !—might that lake his bulk contain.
Spake again that fish to Manu,—as he saw him, thus he spake :
" Bring me now, O blest and holy !—to the Ganga, ocean's bride,
Let me dwell in her wide waters—yet, O loved one, as thou wilt,
Be it so ; whate'er thy bidding,—murmur would beseem me ill,
Since through thee, O blest and blameless !—to this wondrous bulk
I've grown."
Thus addressed, the happy Manu—took again the fish, and bore
To the sacred stream of Ganga,—and himself he cast him in.
Still it grew, as time rolled onward,—tamer of thy foes ! that fish.
Spake again that fish to Manu,—as he saw him, thus he spake :
" Mightiest ! I can dwell no longer—here in Ganga's narrow stream;

Best of men ! once more befriend me,—bear me to the ocean swift."
Manu's self from Ganga's water—took again that wondrous fish,
And he brought him to the ocean,—with his own hand cast him in.
Brought by Manu to the ocean—very large that fish appeared,
But not yet of form unmeasured,—spread delicious odours round.
But that fish by kingly Manu—cast into the ocean wide,
In these words again bespake him,—and he smiled as thus he spake :
" Blessed ! thou hast still preserved me,—still my every wish fulfilled,
When the awful time approaches,—hear from me what thou must do.
In a little time, O blessed !—all this firm and seated earth,
All that moves upon its surface,—shall a deluge sweep away.
Near it comes, of all creation—the ablution day is near ;
Therefore what I now forewarn thee—may thy highest weal secure.
All the fixed and all the moving,—all that stirs, or stirreth not,
Lo, of all the time approaches,—the tremendous time of doom.
Build thyself a ship, O Manu !—strong, with cables well prepared,
And thyself, with the seven Sages,—mighty Manu, enter in.
All the living seeds of all things,—by the Brahmins named of yore,
Place thou first within thy vessel,—well secured, divided well.
From thy ship keep watch, O hermit !—watch for me, as I draw near;
Horned shall I swim before thee,—by my horn thou'lt know me well.
This the work thou must accomplish,—I depart ; so fare thee well ;
Over those tumultuous waters—none without mine aid can sail.
Doubt thou not, O lofty minded !—of my warning speech the truth."
To the fish thus answered Manu:—" All that thou requir'st, I'll do."
Thus they parted, of each other—mutual leave when they had ta'en.
Manu, raja ! to accomplish—all to him the fish had said.
Taking first the seeds of all things—launched he forth upon the sea :
On the billowy sea, the prudent—in a beauteous vessel rode.
Manu of the fish bethought him ;—conscious of his thought the fish,
Conqueror of hostile cities !—with his horn came floating by.
King of men, the born of Manu !—Manu saw the sea-borne fish,
In his form foreshown, the horned—like a mountain huge and high.
To the fish's head his cable—Manu bound, O king of men !

Strong and firm his cable wound he—round and round on either horn ;
And the fish, all conquering raja !—with that twisted cable bound,
With the utmost speed that vessel—dragged along the ocean tide.
In his bark along the ocean—boldly went the king of men :
Dancing with the tumbling billows,—dashing through the roaring spray,
Tossed about by winds tumultuous—in the vast and heaving sea,
Like a trembling, drunken woman,—reeled that ship, O king of men.
Earth was seen no more, no region,—nor the intermediate space ;
All around a waste of water,—water all, and air and sky.
In the whole world of creation,—princely son of Bharata !
None was seen but those seven Sages,—Manu only, and the fish.
Years on years, and still unwearied—drew that fish the bark along,
Till at length it came, where lifted—Himavan its loftiest peak.
There at length it came, and smiling—thus the fish addressed the sage :
" To the peak of Himalaya—bind thou now thy stately ship."
At the fish's mandate quickly—to the peak of Himavan
Bound the sage his bark, and ever—to this day that loftiest peak
Bears the name of Naubandhana—from the binding of the bark.

To the sage, the god of mercy—thus with fixed look bespake :
" I am lord of all creation,—Brahma, higher than all height ;
I in fishlike form have saved thee,—Manu, in the perilous hour ;
But from thee new tribes of creatures,—gods, asuras, men must spring.
All the worlds must be created,—all that moves or moveth not,
By an all-surpassing penance—this great work must be achieved.
Through my mercy, thy creation—to confusion ne'er shall run."
Spake the fish, and on the instant—to the invisible he passed.
Vivaswata's son, all eager—the creation to begin,
Stood amid his work confounded—mighty penance wrought he then.
So fulfilled that rigorous penance,—instant Manu 'gan create—
Instant every living creature,—raja ! he began to form.

Such the old, the famous legend,—named the story of the Fish,
Which to thee I have related,—this for all our sins atones.
He that hears it, Manu's legend,—in the full possession he,
Of all things complete and perfect—to the heavenly world ascends.

NOTES ON NALA.

P. 215, l. 4. *Over, over all exalted.*] This repetition is in the original.

P. 215, l. 5. *Holy, deep-read in the Vedas.*] All the perfections, which, according to the opinions and laws of the Hindus, distinguish the sovereign from the rest of mankind, are here ascribed to the hero of the poem. The study of the Vedas must be cultivated by the three superior castes, and ensures both temporal and eternal beatitude. In the laws of Menu it is said, "Greatness is not conferred by years, not by grey hairs, not by wealth, not by powerful kindred." The divine sages have established this rule—Whoever has read the Vedas and their Angas, he is among us great. (JONES's MENU, ii. 254.) Of all these duties, answered Bhrigu, the principal is to acquire from the Upanishads a true knowledge of the one supreme God: that is the most exalted of all sciences, because it ensures immortality. (xii. 85.) For in the knowledge and adoration of one God, which the Veda teaches, all the rules of good conduct before-mentioned in order, are fully comprised. (ib. 87.)

The study of the Vedas is considered the peculiar duty of kings. (vii. 43.) The Upanishadas are doctrinal extracts of the Vedas.

The Indian law demands in the most rigorous manner from every one of noble birth the mastery over the *senses*. Menu says, c. ii. 93, "A man by the attachment of his organs to sensual pleasure, incurs certain guilt; but having wholly subdued them he thence attains heavenly bliss. (v. 94.) Desire is never satisfied with the enjoyment of desired objects; as the fire is not appeased with clarified butter; it only blazes more vehemently. (v. 97.) To

a man contaminated by sensuality, neither the Vedas, nor liberality, nor sacrifices, nor strict observances, nor pious austerities, ever procure felicity." The control over every kind of sensual indulgence is enjoined upon the king. (vii. 44.) Day and night must he strenuously exert himself to gain complete victory over his own organs; since that king alone whose organs are completely subdued, can keep his people firm to their duty.

Skill in the management of horses and chariots, which in a subsequent part of the poem is of great importance to Nala, is often mentioned as a praiseworthy accomplishment of kings. In the Ramayana, for instance, in the description of king Dasaratha, which likewise contains the above-mentioned traits of character—"In this city Ayodhya was a king named Dusharuthâ, descended from Ikshwaku, perfectly skilled in the Veda and Vedangas, prescient, of great ability, beloved by all his people, a great charioteer, constant in sacrifice, eminent in sacred duties, a royal sage, nearly equalling a Muhurshi, famed throughout the three worlds, mighty, triumphant over his enemies, observant of justice, having a perfect command of his appetites." CAREY and MARSHMAN's Translation, sect. vi. p. 64.

P. 215, l. 5.—*in Nishadha lord of earth.*] I have accented this word not quite correctly Nĭshādhă, in order to harmonise with the trochaic flow of my metre. It appears to be the same as Nishadha-râshtra and Nishādha-dĕsa. See Wilford's list of mountains, rivers, countries; from the Purânas and other books. Asiatic Researches, vol. viii. BOPP.

P. 215, l. 6. *Loving dice, of truth unblemished.*] The Sanscrit word Akshapujah is differently interpreted. Kosegarten renders it in a good sense as "fearing heaven." He argues that it is the poet's object in this passage to describe the good qualities of Nala, and that he does not become a gamester till possessed by the demon Kali. Bopp gives the sense in the text which seems to connect it with the history of king Yudishtir, to whom it is addressed.

P. 215, l. 7. *Sense subdued.*] The highest notion of this favourite perfection of Indian character, may be given in the words of the author of the Bhagavat-Gíta: "The highest perfection to which the soul can attain, is action without passion. The mind is to be entirely independent of external objects; to preserve its undisturbed serenity it should have the conscious power of withdrawing all its senses within itself, as the tortoise draws all its limbs beneath its shell." Action is necessary, but action must produce no emotion — no sensation on the calm spirit within; whatever may be their consequences, however important, however awful, events are to be unfelt, and almost unperceived by the impassive mind; and on this principle Arjuna is to execute the fated slaughter upon his kindred without the least feeling of sorrow or compunction being permitted to intrude on the divine apathy of his soul. Some of the images in which this passionless tranquillity of the spirit is described, appear singularly beautiful:

As to th' unrais'd unswelling ocean flow the multitudinous streams,
So to the soul serene, unmov'd—flow in the undisturbing lusts.

And then again the soul, in this state of unbroken quietude,
Floats like the lotus on the lake, unmov'd, unruffled by the tide.

P. 215, l. 8.—*best, a present Manu he.*] Manu, or Menu, the representative of the human race; the holy, mythological ancestor of the Hindus. In the Diluvium, the Indian version of the Deluge, (see the latter part of this volume,) Manu is the survivor of the human race — the second ancestor of mankind. The first Menu is named "Swayambhuva, or sprung from the self-existing." From him "came six descendants, other Menus, or perfectly understanding the Scripture, each giving birth to a race of his own, all exalted in dignity, eminent in power." Laws of Menu, i. 61. The great code of law "the Hindus firmly believe to have been promulged in the beginning of time by Menu, son or grandson of Brahma, or in plain English the first of created beings, and not the oldest only but the noblest of legislators." Sir W. Jones's preface to Laws of Menu; Works, vii. 76. In the Ramayana, in like manner, king Dasaratha is compared to the ancient

king, Menu. The word Manu, as the name of the ancestor of men, is derived from the Sanscrit root Man, to know (Wilson in voce); in the same manner as the Sanscrit Manisha, knowledge, Manushya, Man — as also the Latin Mens, and the German Mensch. According to this etymology, Man, Mensch, properly means "the knowing," the Being endowed with knowledge. The German word, Meinen, to mean, or be of opinion, belongs to the same stock.

P. 215, l. 9. *So there dwelt in high Vidarbha.*] This city is called by our poet Vidarbha, Nagara, the city of Vidarbha, and Cundina. According to Wilford, it is Burra Nag-poor. Bopp. Colebrooke, Asiatic Researches, remarks, that some suppose it to be the modern Berar, which borders on the mountain Vindhya or Gondwanah. The kingdom of Vidarbha, and its capital Kundini, are mentioned in the very remarkable drama Malati and Madhava. Wilson's Hindu Theatre, ii. 16; and extract from Harivansa, in Langlois, Monumens de l'Inde, p. 54.

P. 215, l. 9.—*Bhima, terrible in strength.*] Bhima-parâkrama. There is a play upon the words, Bhima meaning terrible.

P. 215, l. 11. *Many a holy act, on offspring.*] He made offerings and performed penance, by which blessings were forced from the reluctant gods. In India not only temporal, but eternal happiness, depends on having children. The son alone by the offering of the Sraddha, or libation for the dead, can obtain rest for the departed spirit of the father. Hence the begetting of a son is a religious duty, particularly for a Brahmin, and is one of the three debts to which he is bound during life. After he has read the Vedas in the form prescribed by Law, has legally begotten a son, and has performed sacrifices to the best of his power, he has paid his three debts, and may then apply his heart to eternal bliss. Menu, vi. 36. By a son a man obtains victory over all people; by a son's son he enjoys immortality; and afterwards, by the son of that grandson, he reaches the solar abode. Menu, ix. 137.

This last passage is immediately followed by the explanation of the Sanscrit word Puttra, son, by "the deliverer from hell." Since the son delivers (trayatè) his father from the hell, named Put, he was therefore called Puttra by Brahma himself. This explanation, which is given by the Indian etymologists, appears nevertheless, as is often the case, rather forced; since the final syllable, tra, which is translated by deliver (or preserve, WILSON, in voce) is a common ending of many words, without the peculiar signification of delivering: as with this final syllable on the word Pu, to be pure, is formed the noun Puwitra, pure. WILKINS, Grammar, p. 454; KOSEGARTEN. The affix with which this last is formed, however, is not tra, but itra, and it affords therefore no ground of objection to the usual etymology of Puttra. WILSON.

The Indian poetry is full of instances of this strong desire for offspring. In the Ramayana, king Dasaratha performs the Aswamedha, or offering of a horse, to obtain a son. "To this magnanimous king, acquainted in every duty, pre-eminent in virtue, and performing sacred austerities for the sake of obtaining children, there was no son to perpetuate his family. At length in the anxious mind of this noble one the thought arose, 'Why do I not perform an Ushwamedha to obtain a son?'" CARRY and MARSHMAN'S translation, sect. viii. p. 74. Compare the Raghu Vansa, canto i., and all that is done by king Dilipa to obtain a son: and the poem of the death of Hidimbha, published by Bopp.

P. 215, l. 14.—*in his hospitable hall.*] Hospitality to a Brahmin is of course one of the greatest virtues. "A Brahmin coming as a guest, and not received with just honour, takes to himself all the reward of the housekeeper's former virtue, even though he had been so temperate as to live on the gleanings of harvests, and so pious as to make oblations in five distinct fires." Sir W. JONES, Menu, iii. 100.

P. 216, l. 2.—*as around great Indra's queen.*] Sachi.

Sachi, soft as morning light,
Blithe Sachi, from her lord Indrani hight.
Sir W. JONES's Hymn to Indra.

P. 216, l. 4. *Mid her handmaids, like the lightning.*] There are two words of similar signification in the original; one of them implies life-giving. Lightning in India being the forerunner of the rainy season, is looked on as an object of delight as much as terror. Bopp, from the Scholiast.

P. 216, l. 4.—*shone she with her faultless form.*] Sri, or Lakshmi, the goddess of beauty and abundance, at once the Ceres and the Alma Venus of India.

> Daughter of ocean and primeval night,
> Who fed with moonbeams dropping silent dew,
> And cradled in a wild wave dancing light.
>
> Sir W. Jones's Ode to Lacshmi.

P. 216, l. 6.—*never mid the Yaksha race.*] The Yakshas are demigods attendant on Kuvera, the god of wealth, descendants of Kasyapa by his wife Khasa. They inhabit mountains, and have intercourse with the Apsarasas, or heavenly nymphs. Sometimes they appear not altogether as good beings, sometimes entirely harmless. "The souls of men enslaved to their passions will rise no higher than the Yakshas." Menu, xii. 47. The subject of the Meghaduta, or Cloud-Messenger of Kalidása, so elegantly translated by Mr. Wilson, is the regret of a Yaksha for his beloved wife. Compare Mr. Wilson's note on the Yakshas, Cloud-Messenger, p. 69.

P. 216, l. 9. *Nala too, 'mong kings the tiger.*] Nara Sardula, the Tiger warrior. I have retained the literal meaning, though, according to Bopp, it means *in fine compositi, optimus, præstantissimus.* Mr. Southey's, Young Tlalala, in Madoc, is the "tiger of the war."

P. 216, l. 10. *Like Kandarpa in his beauty.*] Kandarpa is the god of love. Kama, Love, or Kam Deo, God of Love. Dipaka, the Inflamer. Manmatha, Heart-disturber. Ananga, the Incorporeal.

God of each lovely sight, each lovely sound.
Soul-kindling, world-inflaming, star y-crowned,
Eternal Cama! or doth Smara bright,
Or proud Ananga give thee more delight.
SIR W. JONES, *Ode to Camdeo.*

P. 216, l. 14...*Thus of each, O son of Kunti.*] Kunti was the mother of King Yudishtir, to whom the poem is related. I have usually omitted this address, which is sometimes made to Yudishthir under the title of Bhárata, i. e. descendant of Bharata, or other appellations.

P. 216, l. 17. *There the swans he saw disporting.*] In the original this is a far less poetic bird, and the author must crave forgiveness for having turned his geese into swans. If, however, we are to believe Bohlen, in his learned work, Das Alte Indien, the translators are altogether mistaken; they have been misled by the similarity of the word Hansa to Gans—a goose. The original he asserts to mean a mythic bird, closely resembling the swan, or perhaps the tall and brilliant flamingo, which Southey has introduced with such effect in one of his rich descriptions in the Curse of Kehama. The goose, however, according to the general opinion, is so common in Indian mythology, that this must be received with much caution. In the modern Tamulic version of the story, translated by Mr. Kindersley, are substituted, "Milk-white Aunnays, descending from the skies, like an undulating garland of pearls." The Aunnays are supposed to be a sort of birds of paradise. They are represented as milk-white; remarkable for the gracefulness of their walk; and endowed with considerable gifts. Mr. Wilson, in his Meghaduta, has given me a precedent for the change of geese into swans; see p. 27, v. 71, with the note. And Mr. Ellis, Asiatic Researches, vol. xiv. p. 29, has the following note on the subject: "There are three distinctions of Hamsa; the Raja-hamsa, with a milk-white body and deep red beak and legs,—this is the Phœnicopteros, or flamingo; the Mallicácsha-hamsa, with brownish beak and legs; and the Dhartarashtra-hamsa, with black beak and legs: the latter is the European swan, the former a variety. The gait of an elegant woman is compared by the Hindu

poets to the proud bearing of a swan in the water. Sonnerat, making a mistake similar to that in the text, translates a passage in which this allusion occurs, in words to the following purport, 'Her gait resembled that of a goose.' Other writers have fallen into the same error." The swans, ou plutôt les Génies ailès, play the same part in an extract from the Harivansa, translated by M. Langlois, in his Monumens Littéraires de l'Inde, *Paris*, 1827, p. 158. The first part of the Harivansa has just appeared, under the auspices of the Oriental Translation Committee.

P. 217, l. 4. *Like the Aswinas in beauty.*] See Asiatic Researches, i. 263; ix. 323. Ramayana, i. 226.

P. 217, l. 7.—*Gandharvas.*] Celestial choristers, of beautiful forms and complexion, usually seen in Hindu sculptures attendant on the deities.

> Celestial genii tow'rd their king advance
> (So called by men) in heaven Gandharvas named,
> For matchless music famed.
> Soon when the bands in lucid rows assemble,
> Flutes breathe, and citherns tremble.
>
> SIR W. JONES, *Ode to Indra.*—See *Ramayana*, l. 125.

P. 217, l. 7.—*the Serpents.*] The serpents are objects of reverence and veneration in India. They are called Nagas, not going; Uragas—breast-going. Their residence is in Pátála, though they are occasional visitants both of heaven and earth. See notes to book V. In the Bhagavat Gita, Arjun sees Brahma "sitting on his lotus-throne; all the Reshees and Oorugns (serpents)," Wilkins' translation, p. 91. According to Wilson (Sanscrit Dict. voce Naga), the race of these beings is said to have sprung from Kadru, the wife of Kasyapa, in order to people Pátála, or the regions below the earth.

P. 217, l. 7.—*the Rakshasas.*] Demons who assume at will the forms of lions, tigers, horses, and other animals, as well as the human shape, with numerous heads and arms. They are represented as cannibals who devour their enemies. See Ramayana.

P. 217, l. 20.—*and with passion heart-possessed.*] It is, literally, her mind (or thought) being possessed by the *heart-sleeper* (i. e. love, reposing or dwelling in the heart).—Wilson.

P. 218, l. 2.—*the Swayembara.*] The self-election. The princesses in India enjoyed this singular privilege. The festival was proclaimed, and from the assembled suitors the lady selected her future husband. The Swayembara is not among the eight kinds of marriages mentioned in the third book of Menu, as customary among the higher castes, in which the parents in general arrange such contracts. The provision in the ninth book (v. 90) appears to belong to the lower classes.—"Three years let a damsel wait, though she be marriageable; but after that term let her choose for herself a bridegroom of equal rank." In the Raghuvansa, a poem, parts of which the author of this translation, if he could command leisure to make himself better acquainted with Sanscrit, would consider well worthy of being introduced to the English reader, there is a very remarkable and beautiful book, describing a Swayembara. This is likewise held at Vidarbha by the daughter of the king. The Mahabharat also describes the Swayembara of the princess Draupadi.

P. 218, l. 3.—*the lord of many peasants.*] Vaisya, the third caste, husbandmen and traders.

P. 218, l. 8. *All with rich and various garlands.*] The use of garlands in the decoration of the houses and temples of the Hindus, and of flowers in their offerings and festivals, furnishes employment to a particular tribe or caste, the málácáras, or wreath makers. Wilson, note 57, on Meghaduta or Cloud-messenger.

P. 218, l. 12.—*Indra's world.*] Indra is the God of heaven, of the thunder and lightning, storm and rain: his dwelling is sometimes placed on mount Meru, as the heaven of the Greeks on Olympus. His city is called Amaravati; his palace Vaijayanti; his garden Nandana. (Kosegarten.)

Hail, mountain of delight,
Palace of glory, blèss'd by glory's king.
With prospering shade embower me, whilst I sing
Thy wonders yet unreached by mortal flight.
Sky-piercing mountain! in thy bowers of love,
No tears are seen, save where medicinal stalks
Weep drops balsamic o'er the silvered walks.
No plaints are heard, save where the restless dove
Of coy repulse and mild reluctance talks.
Mantled in woven gold, with gems inchas'd,
With emerald hillocks graced,
From whose fresh laps, in young fantastic mazes,
Soft crystal bounds and blazes,
Bathing the lithe convolvulus, that winds
Obsequious, and each flaunting arbour binds.

SIR W. JONES, *Ode to Indra.*

P. 218, l. 13.—*Narada and Parvatas.*] Two of the divine Munis or Rishis. Narada is the son of Brahma; a friend of Krishna, a celebrated lawgiver, and inventor of the vinà, or lute. (WILSON, Dict. in voce.) Narada is mentioned as one of the "ten lords of created bèings, eminent in holiness." MENU, i. 34, 35.

P. 218, l. 15. *Them salutes the cloud-compeller.*] 'Maghavan' is by some explained 'the cloudy.' I have adopted the word used by the translators of Homer.

P. 218, l. 22. *Theirs this everlasting kingdom.*] Kshetriyas, or warriors, slain in battle, are transported to Swerga, the heaven of Indra, by the Apsarasas or nymphs of heaven: hence they are his "ever-honoured guests." "Those rulers of the earth, who, desirous of defeating each other, exert their utmost strength in battle, without ever averting their faces, ascend after death directly to heaven." MENU, vii. 89. Indra means to say, "Why are none now-killed in battle now-a-days, that I see none arriving in my heaven, Swerga?"

P. 218, l. 22.—*even as Kamadhuk is mine.*] Kamadhuk, the cow of plenty. She was brought forth on churning the ocean to produce the amrita, or drink of immortality. The interpretation

is doubtful; it may be that this realm is to them the cow of plenty (as bestowing upon them all their wishes), as the cow of plenty is mine. See BOPP's and KOSEGARTEN's notes.

P. 218, l. 25. *Thus addressed by holy Sakra.*] Sakra, a name of Indra.

> Hail, Dynpeter, dismay to Bala's pride,
> Or speaks Purander best thy martial fame,
> Or Sacra, mystic name.—SIR W. JONES, *Hymn to Indra.*

Bala and Vritra were the "giants" slain by Indra.

P. 219, l. 4. *As they spake, the world-protectors.*] The world-protectors are the eight gods next below the trine supreme, Brahma, Siva, and Vishnu. They are Indra, the god of heaven; Surya, the god of the sun; Soma or Chandra, the god of the moon; Agni, the god of fire; Pavana, the god of the wind; Kuvera, the god of wealth; Varuna, the god of water; Yama, the god of the infernal regions. At present four only of these gods are introduced; Indra, Yama, Agni, and Varuna. Compare, however, Mr. WILSON's note to Vikrama and Urvasi, Hindu Theatre, i. 219.

P. 219, l. 13.—*equal to the god of love.*] Manmatha, a name of Kandarpa, or Camdeo, the god of love.

P. 221, l. 10. *Pledge to me thy faith, O raja.*] Bopp has rendered '*pranayaswa*,' *uxorem duc*, but this is questionable. The root '*ni*,' with the preposition '*pari*,' has that sense, but with '*pra*' its usual acceptation is 'to love, to bear affection.' I have not met with it in the sense 'to marry.' Bopp is followed by Rosen in assigning this sense to '*prani*.' WILSON.

P. 221, l. 12. *In full trust is thine.*] Bopp connects '*visrabdha*' with '*pranaya*,' and renders them *speratas nuptias*. I should rather join it adverbially with '*sarvam*, all;' that is, 'yours in full trust or confidence: grant me your affection.' There is something indelicate, though inartificial, in Damayanti's urging matrimony so earnestly. WILSON.

P. 221, l. 16.—*the vile noose will I endure.*] Hanging was not considered by the Hindus an undignified mode of self-destruction. See Hindu Theatre, ii. 237 and 299.

P. 221, l. 25. *He, who all the world compressing.*] Nala here recites the separate pretensions and attributes of the great deities, first, of Hutasa, a name of Agni, the god of fire. The sense here is extremely obscure. Bopp renders it literally. 'Qui hanc terram totam °contraxit,' seems ambiguous. It may refer to the agency of fire in compacting the world and again consuming it, or simply shrivelling it up, while in the act of consuming.

P. 221, l. 27. *He, in awe of whose dread sceptre.*] Yama: he is called the Dharma raja, king of justice. WILFORD in Asiatic Researches. Compare SOUTHEY's description in the Curse of Kehama, Canto xxii., with the note from Wilford on which it is founded; and his interview with Sawitri in BOPP's collection of Extracts from the Mahábhárata.

P. 222, l. 2.—*slayer of the infernal host.*] Indra. He was the conqueror of the Danavas or dæmons:

> When through the waves of war thy charger sprang,
> Each rock rebellowed, and each forest rang,
> The vanquish'd Asurs felt avenging pains.
>
> SIR W. JONES, *Ode to Indra.*

P. 222, l. 4.—*in thy mind if thou couldst choose.*] Varuna, the god of waters. Schlegel and Rosen consider that a sloka, describing the attributes of Varuna, has been lost—that in this line 'varanam, scligendum' should be written instead of 'Varunam.' The Calcutta edition has the same reading, however, and the change is not necessary: if any alteration be made it should probably be in the first word, and 'Vriyatám' be read in place of 'Kriyatám.'—WILSON.

P. 223, l. 15. *Came the day of happy omen.*] The Indians, like all other Asiatic nations, have their fortunate and unfortunate days. The month is divided into thirty lunar days (tithis), which

are personified as nymphs. See the Dissertation on the lunar year by Sir W. JONES, Asiatic Researches, iii. 257. In the Laws of Menu are multifarious directions concerning the days of the moon fit or unfit for particular actions. "The dark lunar day destroys the spiritual teacher; the fourteenth destroys the learner; the eighth and the day of the full moon destroy all remembrance of scripture; for which reason he must avoid reading on those lunar days."

P. 223, l. 19. *They, the court with golden columns, etc.*] The literal rendering is, 'they entered the hall (the stage, or place of exhibition, a spacious court or quadrangle) splendid with columns of gold, and brilliant with a portal; a temporary or triumphal arch (torana).' There is allusion to such a porch or portal in the Mudrá Rakshasa (Hindu Theatre, ii. 181, 182), also in the Toy Cart (i. 82). For gold pillars, see CRAWFURD's description of the Hall of Audience at Ava.

"The roof is supported by a great number of pillars: with the exception of about fourteen or fifteen inches at the bottom of each pillar, painted of a bright red, the whole interior of the palace is one blaze of gilding—although little reconcilable to our notions of good taste in architecture, the building is unquestionably most splendid and brilliant, and I doubt whether so singular and imposing a royal edifice exists in any other country." *Embassy to Ava*, 133. WILSON.

P. 223, l. 24.—*delicate in shape and hue.*] Bopp's text is 'ákáravantah suslakshnah, having forms and delicate.' The Calcutta edition reads 'ákáraverna suslakshnah, elegant in figure and colour (complexion)'. Delicacy of colour, i. e. a lighter shade, scarcely amounting to blackness at all, is in general a mark of high caste. WILSON.

P. 223, l. 27. *As with serpents, Bhogavati.*] Bhogavati, the capital of the serpents in the infernal world. In the Ramayana, Ayodhya is described as guarded by warriors, as Bhogavati by the serpents.

P. 224, l. 8.—*Nala's form might not discern.*] The form of the gods, as it is here strikingly described by the poet, differs from that of men by the absence of those defects which constitute the inferiority of a mortal body to that of the inhabitants of the Indian heaven. The immortal body does not perspire, it is unsoiled by dust, the garlands which they wear stand erect, that is, the flowers are still blooming and fresh. The gods are further distinguished by their strong fixed gaze, and by floating on the earth without touching it. They have no shadow. Nala's form is the opposite of all these. KOSEGARTEN.

P. 225, l. 2.—*saw she, and with moveless eyes.*] "The gods are supposed to be exempt from the momentary elevation and depression of the upper eyelid, to which mortals are subject. Hence a deity is called 'Animisha,' or 'Animesha,' one whose eyes do not twinkle." Mr. Wilson, in his note to Vikrama and Urvasi (Hindu Theatre, i. 237. p. 60), quotes this passage, and suggests that the "marble eyes of Venus, by which Helen knew the goddess, and which the commentators and translators seem to be much perplexed with, are probably the 'stabdha lochana,' the fixed eyes of the Hindus, full and unveiled for an instant, like the eyes of a marble statue. Mr. Wilson has, I think, been misled by the words *δμματα μαρμαίροντα*, which rather expresses the contrary. Μαρμαίρω is to glitter, and is applied in many places in Homer to the gleaming of armour. The *μαρμαρυγὰς θηεῖτο ποδῶν* of the Odyssey is well translated by Gray, "glance their many twinkling feet." In Mr. Wilson's curious reference to Heliodorus (the passage is in the Æthiopica, iii. 13.) the author appears to write from Egyptian rather than Grecian notions. He extorts, somewhat violently, a meaning from Homer's words, *δεινὼ δὲ οἱ ὄσσε φάανθην*, which they by no means necessarily bear; but the analogy is as curious if Egyptian as if Grecian.

P. 225, l. 4. *With his shadow, garland drooping.*] According to the Zoroastrian religion, one of the distinctions of human beings, after the restoration of all things and the final triumph of Ormuzd, shall be that they shall cast no shadow; *μήτε σκίαν ποιοῦντας*.

Theopomp. apud Plut. de Isid. et Osirid. Compare Anquetil du Perron and Kleuker, Anhang zum Zendavesta, i. 140.

P. 225, l. 21. *And the happy pair devoutly.*] The devotion of the silent spirit, the purely mental worship, is the holiest and most acceptable service to the gods. Compare Wilkins, Bhagavat-Gita, p. 74; Menu, ii. 85; vi. 235.

P. 225, l. 26. *Agni gave his own bright presence.*] Agni gave him the command of fire whenever he willed. Hutásа is a name of Agni; hut-asa, 'qui sacrificium edit,' i. e. ignis. Bopp's explanation, 'mundos per Deum Agnem splendentes,' has been adopted as giving the clearest sense. Varuna gave the command of water.

P. 225, l. 30.—*each his double blessing gave.*] Bopp translates this, 'par liberorum dederunt,' but the original says, 'all (or each) gave a pair,' i. e. a couple of blessings: making eight, as stated above; each of the four gods giving two. Wilson.

P. 226, l. 9. *Lived in bliss, as with his Sachi.*] Indra, the giant-killer; Sachi, his spouse.

P. 226, l. 12. *Of the horse the famous offering.*] The reader will be best acquainted with the Aswamedha, or sacrifice of the horse, from the spirit and felicity with which it has been introduced by Southey in the "Curse of Kehama." See also the Ramayana.

P. 226, l. 21. *As they parted thence, with Kali.*] Dwapara and Kali are the names of the third and fourth ages of the world. The latter is here personified as a male deity.

P. 227, l. 8.—*the Puranas too the fifth.*] In the original 'Akhyana, history, legend.' The four Vedas are the Rig-veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sama Veda, and the Atharvana. Akhyana is, as it were, tradition superadded to scripture.

P. 227, l. 26. *Nala after act uncleanly.*] This is rather an unmanageable passage; but the Latin translation has not rendered its purport correctly. 'Upaspris' can in no case mean 'calcare:' it implies touching, and especially touching or sipping water, as part of the ceremony of purification. As Menu; 'Let each man sprinkle the cavities of his body, and taste water in due form, etc.'' In the text of this passage, 'upaspris' is used for touching or sprinkling. In others, it is used in the sense of ablution, bathing.[2] In the lexicons it is explained 'upasparsa sparsamátre, snánáchamanayorapi, touch in general, ablution, sipping water.' In the Mitákshara, on the subject of personal purification, the direction is, after evacuations, 'Dwijo nityam upaspriset, Let the man of two births always perform the upaspersa,' i. e. says the commentator, 'áchámet, let him sip water.' The sense of the passage of the text is, 'that Nala sat down to evening prayer (as Menu directs, he who repeats it sitting at evening twilight, etc.) after performing his purifications, and sipping water, but without having washed his feet, such ablution being necessary not because they had been so soiled, but because such an act is also part of the rite of purification. As the Mitákshara, 'etasmát páda prakshálana prápti, after that purification, comes the washing of the feet,' especially prior to any religious act. So Colebrooke: "Having washed his hands and feet, and having sipped water, the priest sits down to worship." A. R. v. 363. Wilson.

P. 228, l. 4. *In the dice of dice embodied.*] 'Sicut taurus boum:' the literal translation of the phrase is explained by the commentator Nilakantha, as 'talus inter talos eximius.' I have adopted Schlegel's reading, which substitutes Dwapara for Kali, as possessing the dice.

P. 228, l. 15. *Then the charioteer advancing.*] The charioteer appears as one of the great officers of state: the master of the horse would convey as lofty a meaning to an English ear.

P. 228, l. 18. *Ill they brook this dire misfortune.*] Vyasana

is a misfortune in a king: neglect of his duty for the pleasures of the chase, gambling, etc.

P. 229, l. 1.—*Punyasloka, king of men.*] Punyasloka is a title applied to other kings celebrated in Hindu poetry, to Yudishthir, and also to Vishnu: it means, celebrated in sacred poems. Wilson, Dict. in voce.

P. 230, l. 9.—*to Cundina's city go.*] Cundina is the capital of the kingdom of Vidarbha.

P. 230, l. 19. *Thence departing, to Ayodhya.*] Ayodhya, or Oude, is famous in all the early poetry of India. "On the banks of the Suruyoo is a large country called Koshula, gay and happy, and abounding with cattle, corn, and wealth. In that country was a famous city called Ayodhya, built formerly by Munoo, the lord of men. A great city, twelve yojanas in extent, the houses of which stood in triple and long-extended rows. It was rich, and perpetually adorned with new improvements; the streets and valleys were admirably disposed, and the principal streets were watered. It was filled with merchants of various descriptions, and adorned with abundance of jewels; difficult of access, filled with spacious houses, beautified with gardens, and groves of mango trees, surrounded by a deep and impassable moat, and completely furnished with arms; was ornamented with stately gates and porticos, and constantly guarded by archers, etc. etc." Ramayana, translated by Carey and Marshman, vol. i. p. 60.

P. 231, l. 32.—*to the region of the south.*] Dakshinaptha signifies properly the land on the right hand; as in the Semitic languages the south is that which is on the right hand. It means here the land to the south of the Nerbudda. Dakshinapatha is very probably meant in the word used by Arrian, Dachinabades. Kosegarten.

P. 231, l. 33. *Passing by Avanti's city.*] Avanti, which Bopp makes a mountain, according to Kosegarten and Mr. Wilson,

is a city, Oujein. Bopp draws a somewhat fanciful analogy between Avanti and the Aventine at Rome. He refers also to Himavan, qu. Mavanten, 'montem.' The philological student will do well to consult this note of Bopp. In the Meghaduta, Oujein is Avanti:

> Behold the city, whose immortal fame
> Glows in Avanti's or Visala's name.—Line 193.

The synonymes of Oujein are thus enumerated by Hemachandra: Ujjayini, Visála, Avanti, and Pushparacandini. Rikshaván, i. e. bear-having, the mount of bears, is part of the Vindhya chain, separating Malwa from Kandesh and Berar. Wilson.

P. 231, l. 34. *Vindhya here, the mighty mountain.*] See note to 'Cloud-Messenger,' page 92 to 94. Compare likewise Asiatic Researches, i. p. 380, where, in one of the famous inscriptions on the staff of Feroz Shah, it is named as one of the boundaries of Aryaverta, the land of virtue, or India. It is named also in the curious Indian grant of land found at Tanna. Asiatic Researches, i. 366.

P. 231, l. 34.—*and Payoshni's seaward stream.*] Payoshni, a river that flows from the Vindhya, mentioned in the Brahmanda Purana. Asiatic Researches, viii. 341.

P. 232, l. 2.—*this to Cosala away.*] Cosala, a city of Ayodhya, or Oude. Cosala is mentioned in the Brahmanda Purana as beyond the Vindhya mountains. Asiatic Researches, viii. 343.

P. 233, l. 7. *Both together by one garment.*] The poet supposes that Damayanti had bestowed half her single garment upon Nala. Bopp. This, however, does not appear to be the case.

P. 233, l. 27. *From her virtue none dare harm her.*] Spenser's Una, and still more the lady in Comus, will recur to the remembrance of the English reader. See Quarterly Review, vol. xlv. p. 20.

P. 234, l. 18.—*may the genii of the woods.*] He calls on the Adityas, Vasavas, and Rudras, the Aswinas, the Maruts. This is the literal version. They are different orders of genii, each consisting of a definite number. The Adityas are twelve, and preside over the different months. They are called the children of Kasyapa and of Aditi his wife. According to Mr. Wilkins (notes to the Bhagavat-Gita, p. 144), they are no more than emblems of the sun for each month in the year. Mr. Wilkins gives their names :—

The Vasavas, or Vasus, are eight. Indra is the first. They are the guardians of the world, and apparently the same with the eight gods mentioned in the early part of the poem.

The Rudras are eleven; according to some, the eleven personifications of Siva, who bears the name of Rudra. Bhagavat-Gita, p. 85, note 144, "The lord of creation meditated profoundly on the earth, and created the gods, the Vasus, Rudras, and Adityas." COLEBROOKE, in Asiatic Researches, viii. 453.

For the Aswinas, see former note.

The Maruts are forty-nine: they preside over the winds (MENU, iii. 88). The chief god of the wind, Pavana, is called Marut. Their origin is described in the Ramayana, i. 420. See also the Hindu Pantheon, p. 92.

P. 235, l. 14. *Hence one moment, thus deserted.*] Conjugal duty is carried to a great height in the laws of Menu: "Though unobservant of approved usages, or enamoured of another woman, or devoid of good qualities, yet a husband must constantly be revered as a god by a virtuous wife," v. 154.

P. 236, l. 7.—*in the satyr-haunted wood.*] Swapada, dog-footed: the dog is an unclean animal in India, as the goat-footed, the "capripedes satyri" in Greece. I have thought the satyr not so exclusively Greek but that it might be used for any "wild man of the woods." The word is also derived from "swan, a dog," and "âpad, to resemble," and is explained by Mr. Wilson, ferocious, savage.

P. 237, l. 13.—*uttered loud her curse of wrath.*] The power of a curse, according to Indian belief, will be best illustrated to the reader of English poetry by "The Curse of Kehama." In the "Death of Yajnadatta," included in this volume, we find the effects of a Brahmin's curse described.

P. 237, l. 22. *Trees of every form and stature.*] I have omitted a long list of trees, the names of which, conveying no notion to an English ear, and wanting the characteristic epithets of Ovid's or of Spenser's well-known and picturesque forest description, would only perplex the reader with several lines of unintelligible words. To the Indian ear these names, pregnant with pleasing associations, and descriptive in their etymological meaning, would, no doubt, convey the same delight as those of the Latin or English.

P. 237, l. 26.—*serpents, elves, and giants saw.*] Kosegarten has translated this word "elves:" they are a kind of evil spirit. In Menu, ii. 96, they are named with the Yakshas and Rakshasas as partaking of unclean food.

P. 239, l. 30. *All the trees of richest foliage.*] A general description has again been substituted in these two lines for the names of various trees.

P. 240, l. 7.—*of the regal sacrifice.*] The king's offering. See COLEBROOKE, in Asiatic Researches, viii. 430.

P. 240, l. 18.—*soma-quaffing, fire-adoring.*] Soma, the juice of the *Asclepias acida*, the moon-plant. Drinking the expressed juice of this plant is a holy ceremony, used at the completion of a sacrifice, and sanctifies the drinker. "He alone is worthy to drink the juice of the moon-plant who keeps a provision of grain sufficient to supply those whom the law commands him to nourish, for the term of three years or more. But a twice-born man, who keeps a less provision of grain, yet presumes to taste the juice of the moon-plant, shall gather no fruit from that sacrament, even though he taste it at the first or solemn, or much less at any

occasional ceremony."—MENU, iii. 197. All the ancestors of the Brahmins are "Soma-pas, moon-plant drinkers."

P. 240, l. 18.—*fire-adoring.*] Watching or maintaining the sacred fire is another duty: it peculiarly belongs to priests and hermits. The latter may watch the fire mentally: "Then, having reposited his holy fires, as the law directs, in his mind, let him live without external fire, without a mansion, wholly silent, feeding on roots and fruit."—MENU, vi. 25.

P. 240, l. 33.—*sweet as the amrita draught.*] For the amrita, the drink of immortality, see Curse of Kehama, the extract from the Mahábhárata quoted by Mr. Wilkins in his notes to the Bhagavat-Gita, and Ramayana, i. 410.

P. 241, l. 8. *To the ancient famous hermits.*] These famous hermits, whose names I have omitted, were, Bhrigu, Atri, and Vasishta.

P. 241, l. 9. *Self-denying, strict in diet.*] The sixth book of Menu is filled with instructions for those who are engaged in 'tapasa:' it is entitled, "On Devotion." "When the father of a family perceives his muscles become flaccid, and his hair grey, and sees the child of his child, let him then seek refuge in a forest. Abandoning all food eaten in towns, and all his household utensils, let him repair to the lonely wood, committing the care of his wife to her sons, or accompanied by her, if she choose to attend him. Let him take up his consecrated fire, and all his domestic implements of making oblations to it, and departing from the town to the forest, let him dwell in it with complete power over his organs of sense and of action. With many sorts of pure food, such as holy sages used to eat, with green herbs, roots, and fruit, let him perform the five great sacraments before mentioned, introducing them with due ceremonies. Let him wear a black antelope's hide, or a vesture of bark; let him suffer the hairs of his head, his beard, and his nails, to grow continually." MENU, vi. 2. et seqq.

P. 241, l. 16. *pulchris femoribus.*] Clausulam hanc prudens omisi.

P. 241, l. 23, *Take thy seat, they said, oh lady.*] The hospitality of the hermits to Damayanti is strictly according to law. "With presents of water, roots, and fruit, let him honour those who visit his hermitage."

P. 241, l. 25. *In your sacred fires, your worship.*] "Let him, as the law directs, make oblations on the hearth with three sacred fires." MENU, vi. 9. Compare iv. 25.

P. 241, l. 25.—*blameless, with your beasts and birds.*] Hermits were to have "a tender affection for all animated bodies." MENU, vi. 8.

P. 242, l. 7.—*twice-born Sages, know ye me.*] The three first castes are "twice-born." The first birth is from the natural mother; the second from the ligation of the zone; the third from the due performance of the sacrifice: such are the births of him who is usually called twice-born, according to the text of the Veda; among them his divine birth is that which is distinguished by the ligation of the zone and sacrificial cord, and in that birth the Gayatri is his mother, and the Acharya his father. MENU, ii. 169.

P. 243, l. 4. *Through devotion now we see him.*] The kind of prophetic trance, in which holy men, abstracted from all earthly thoughts, were enwrapt, enabled them to see things future.

P. 243, l. 23. *Best of trees, the Asoca blooming.*] The Asoca is a shrub consecrated to Mahadeva; men and women of all classes ought to bathe, on a particular day, in some holy stream, especially the Brahma-putra, and drink water with the buds of the Asoca floating in it. This shrub is planted near the temples of Siva, and grows abundantly on Ceylon. Sita is said to have been confined in a grove of it, while in captivity by Ravana; other relators say that she was confined in a place or house called

Asocavan. The Asoca is a plant of the first order of the eighth class, of leguminous fructification, and bears flowers of exquisite beauty. Van Rheede (Hortus Malab. vol. v. tab. 59.) calls it Asjogam. See Asiatic Researches, iii. 254, 277. Moor, Hindu Pantheon, 55.

P. 244, l. 1.—*Truly be thou named Asoca.*] Asoca, from *a*, privative, and *soka*, grief; a play of words, as when Helen, in Euripides, is called 'Ελεναs, the destroyer of ships. Many other instances will occur to the classical reader. In Malati and Madhava, the forlorn lover in turn addresses different objects of nature, the clouds, the birds, and the elephants, to inform him whether they have seen his lost mistress. Act ix. See, however, Mr. Wilson's note, who seems to think that he addresses the sylvan deities.

P. 245, l. 15.—*Manibhadra, guard us well.*] Manibhadra, the tutelar deity of travellers and merchants: probably a name of Kuvera, the god of wealth.

P. 245, l. 18. *To the realm of Chedi's sovereign.*] Chedi is the name of the country now called Chandail. The country is perpetually named in the marriage of Roukmini, extracted from the Harivansa by Mons. Langlois, Monumens de l'Inde, p. 96.

P. 245. Compare the Raghuvansa, ch. v. 43 to 59.

P. 246. l. 2.—*lo, a herd of elephants,*
Oozing moisture from their temples—

Where the wild elephant delights to shed
The juice exuding fragrant from his head.
Wilson's *Cloud-Messenger, p.* 127, *and note.*

P. 246, l. 21.—*the three worlds seemed all appalled.*] Swerga, heaven, Martya or Bhumi, the earth, and Patala, hell.

P. 247, l. 6. *And Vaisravana the holy.*] Vaisravana is another name of Kuvera, the god of wealth.

P. 247, l. 26. *In some former life committed.*] The soul, in its transmigration, expiates the sins committed in a former state of being. This necessary corollary from the doctrine of the metempsychosis appears to have prevailed among the pharisaic Jews in the time of our Saviour: "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" JOHN, ix. 2.

P. 248, l. 23.—*in their curious gamesome play.*] Kutuhalàt, rendered by Bopp 'cum voluptate,' means, 'from curiosity,' WILSON.

P. 249, l. 16. *I with but one robe, him naked.*] Bopp's text is incorrect here. Instead of 'Tam. ekavasanam,' the accusative masculine, it should be 'Tam ekavasanà, I with one garment clad,' the nominative feminine, referring to Damayanti, not to Nala: "I with one garment following him naked and deprived of reason, like one crazed, had not slept for many nights." WILSON.

P. 249, l. 31. *That I eat not broken victuals.*] Among the kinds of food proscribed to a Brahmin are, "the food of a servile man and the orts of another."

P. 249. l. 31.—*wash not feet with menial hand.*] The Latin translation, 'ne faciam pedibus cursum,' is faulty: the sense is, "that I perform not washing of the feet." Damayanti means that she is not to perform menial offices appropriated to persons of low caste. Stipulating for a carriage would be rather extraordinary. WILSON.

P. 250, l. 22. *Nárada, the famous hermit.*] One of the Devarshis, and a great prophet, who is supposed to be still wandering about the world. 'Nara' signifies a thread or clew, a precept, and 'da,' giver. Whenever he appears he is constantly employed in giving good counsel. WILKINS, note on Bhagavat-Gita.

P. 251, l. 5. *Ere the tenth step he had counted—him the sudden serpent bit.*] 'Dasa' means both 'bite' and 'ten.'

P. 251, l. 18. *Neither Brahmin fear, nor Sages.*] In Indian poetry four classes of holy men, or Rishis, are distinguished, and rise, one above the other, in the following rank: Rajarshis, royal Rishis; Maharshis, great Rishis; Brahmarshis, Brahminical Rishis; and Dewarshis, divine Rishis. KOSEGARTEN. Another enumeration specifies seven grades. WILSON, *in voce.*

P. 251, l. 32. *Saying thus, of vests celestial—gave he to the king a pair.*] The dress of a Hindu consists of two pieces of cloth, one, the lower garment, fastened round his waist, and one, the upper garment, thrown loosely and gracefully over the shoulders. WILSON.

P. 252, l. 6. *In the art of dressing viands.*] This, it will be remembered, was one of the gifts bestowed by the gods on Nala at his marriage.

P. 252, l. 12.—*hundred hundreds is thy pay.*] Suvarnas, a certain measure of gold. WILSON, Dict. *in voce.*

P. 253, l. 2. There is in the text a second line, repeating the same sentiment. Bopp proposes to reject the first, I have omitted the second.

P. 253, l. 15. *And a royal grant for maintenance.*] See Bopp's note. I have adopted the second sense of the word Agrahārah. Such grants were not uncommon in India, as throughout the east. See the grants on copper-plates found near Bombay, Asiatic Researches, i. 362. So the well-known gifts of the king of Persia to Themistocles.

P. 253, l. 23.—*on a royal holiday.*] A day proclaimed as fortunate by the king.

P. 254, l. 3.—*like Manmatha's queen divine.*] The bride of Kámadeva is Rati, pleasure.

P. 254, l. 7. *Like the pallid night, when Rahu.*] This is a favourite simile of the Indian poets.

> That snatched my love from the uplifted sword,
> Like the pale moon from Rahu's ravenous jaws.
> WILSON'S *Malati and Madhava*, p. 62.

> ——— and now thou fall'st, a prey
> To death, like the full moon to Rahu's jaws
> Consigned. Ibid. p. 115.

In Indian mythology, eclipses are caused by the dragon Rahu attempting to swallow up the moon. The origin of their hostility is given in a passage quoted by Mr. Wilkins from the Mahabharat, in his notes to the Bhagavat-Gita:—"And so it fell out that when the Soors were quenching their thirst for immortality, Rahoo, an Asoor, assumed the form of a Soor, and began to drink also; and the water had but reached his throat, when the sun and moon, in friendship to the Soors, discovered the deceit, and instantly Narayan cut off his head as he was drinking, with his splendid weapon, chakra. And the gigantic head of the Asoor, emblem of a monstrous summit, being thus separated from his body by the chakra's edge, bounded into the heavens with a dreadful cry, whilst the ponderous trunk fell, cleaving the ground asunder, and shaking the whole earth unto its foundations, with all its islands, rocks, and forests. And from this time the head of Rahoo resolved on eternal enmity, and continueth even unto this day at times to seize upon the sun and moon." p. 149.

P. 254, ls. 6—12. This long train of similes, in which the images of the lotus flower and the moon so perpetually occur, is too characteristic to be omitted or compressed. I have here and there used the license of a paraphrase.

P. 254, l. 17. *To the unadorned, a husband.*] "Married women must be honoured and adorned by their fathers and brothren, by their husbands, and by the brothren of their husbands, if they seek abundant prosperity." MENU, iii, 55.

P. 254, l. 24.—*the moon's bride.*] Rohinia. The moon, as in the northern mythologies, is a male deity. See WILFORD, in Asiatic Researches, iii, 384. Rohinia is explained by Mr. Wilson the fourth lunar asterism, figured by a wheeled carriage, and containing five stars, probably $\alpha\ \beta\ \gamma\ \delta\ \epsilon$, Tauri. In mythology the asterism is personified as one of the daughters of Daksha, and wives of the moon.—Sanscrit Dict. *in voce.* Comp. Virkrama and Urvasi, p. 57.

P. 256, l. 28.—*Dasarna.*] Dasarna is mentioned in the Cloud Messenger of Kalidasa.

Dasarna's fields await the coming shower.

See likewise Mr. Wilson's note, p. 37.

P. 258, l. 15. *By the wind within the forest—fanned, intensely burns the fire.*] Kosegarten supposes this to mean, that as the incessant wind kindles the fire in the grove of bamboos, so their repeated words may fan the fire of pity in the heart of Nala.

P. 261, l. 2. *To desire this deed unholy.*] A second marriage in a woman is considered in India an inexpiable breach of conjugal fidelity. "A virtuous wife ascends to heaven, though she have no child, if after the decease of her lord she devotes herself to pious austerity. But a widow, who, from a wish to bear children, slights her deceased husband by marrying again, brings disgrace on herself here below, and shall be excluded from the seat of her lord." MENU, v, 160-161. "She who neglects her former (purva) lord, though of a lower class, and takes another (para) of a higher, becomes despicable in this world, and is called para purva, or one who had a different husband before." Ibid. 163.

P. 261, l. 21. *With the ten good marks distinguished.*] Avarttas are "locks," curls, or twists of the hair in certain forms on different parts of the body—here they are apparently: forehead 2, head 2, chest 2, ribs 2, flanks 2, crupper 1. In the Magha, v·

9, we have the term Avarttina applied to horses; on which the commentator observes, "Avarttina signifies horses having the ten Avarttas, marks of excellence; they are, two on the breast, two on the head, two on the hollows of the ribs, two on the hollows of the flanks, and one on the crupper (Prapata); these are called the ten Avarttas. Avartta means an eddy, or whirlpool, and the name is applied to dispositions of the hair of a horse which resemble a whirlpool." WILSON.

P. 261, l. 21.—*born in Sindhu.*] The Sindhu is the Indian name for the Indus; the neighbouring territory is called Sind. See Asiatic Researches, viii. 336.

P. 262, l. 14.—*Matali.*] The charioteer of Indra. See Rhaguvansa, xii, 86, and Sacontala.

P. 263, l. 10. *Ten miles, lo, it lies behind us.*] A Yojana; according to some eleven, according to others five or six English miles. I have given a round number.

P. 263, l. 12.—*Vibhitak.*] 'Beleric Myrobalan.' WILSON, Sanscrit Dict. *in voce.*

P. 263, l. 20. *Kotis.*] A Koti is ten millions.

P. 264, l. 30.—*Kali.*] It must be remembered that Kali, while within the body of Nala, had been enchanted by the serpent Karkotaka.

P. 265, l. 4. Damayanti; who had cursed in the forest all who had caused the misery of Nala.

P. 265, l. 13. Compare Prospero's power in the Tempest.

P. 265, l. 29. *All the region round him echoing—with the thunders of his car.*] This scene rather reminds us of the watchman reporting the rapid approach of Jehu, "The driving is

like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously." II Kings, ix, 20.

P. 265, l. 31. *In their joy they pawed and trampled.*] The horses of Nala had been before conveyed to the city of king Bhima by Varshneya.

P. 266, l. 9.—*as at sound of coming rain.*] The rejoicing of the peacocks at the approach of rain is very sweetly described in the play of Malati and Madhava, translated by Mr. Wilson.

> Ah Malati, how can I bear to contemplate
> The young Tamala, bowed beneath the weight
> Of the light rain; the quivering drops that dance
> Before the cooling gale; the joyful cry
> That echoes round, as pleased the pea-fowl hail
> The bow of heaven propitious to their loves.—p. 108.

In the Cloud Messenger, the Yaksha who addresses the cloud, fears lest it should be delayed by the cry of the peacock—

> Or can the peacock's animated hail,
> The bird with lucid eyes, to lure thee fail.—l. 147.

In another passage,

> Pleased on each terrace, dancing with delight,
> The friendly peacock hails thy grateful flight.—l. 215.

P. 270, l 22.—*much and various viands came.*] The reader must remember the various gifts bestowed on king Nala by the gods upon his marriage.

P. 271, l. 20.—*of her mouth ablution made.*] Washing the mouth after food, which Damayanti in her height of emotion does not forget, is a duty strictly enjoined in the Indian law, which so rigidly enforces personal cleanliness. "With a remnant of food in the mouth, or when the Sraddha has recently been eaten, let no man even meditate in his heart on the holy texts." Menu, iv, 109. "Having slumbered, having sneezed, having eaten, having spitten, having told untruths, having drunk water, and going to read sacred books, let him, though pure, wash his mouth." v. 145.

P. 272, l. 17.—*hair dishevelled, mire-defiled.*] As a sign of sorrow and mourning.

P. 272, l. 28. *I will be.*] "I will be," must be the commencement of the prayer uttered by the bridegroom at the time of marriage. It does not correspond with any of those cited by Mr. Colebrooke. It is probably analogous to that given by him, Asiatic Researches, viii. p. 301. WILSON.

P. 273, l. 33. *He through all the world that wanders—witness, the all-seeing wind.*] See the curious Law of Ordeal, Asiatic Researches, i. p. 402, "On the trial by fire, let both hands of the accused be rubbed with rice in the husk, and well examined: then let seven leaves of the Aswatha (the religious fig-tree) be placed on them, and bound with seven threads." Thou, O fire, pervadest all beings! O cause of purity! who givest evidence of virtue and of sin, declare the truth in this my hand.

P. 274, l. 15.—*flowers fell showering all around.*] These heavenly beings are ever ready, in the machinery of Hindu epics, to perform their pleasing office (of showering flowers on the head of the happy pair) on every important occasion: they are called Pushpa-vrishti, or flower-rainers. Moor, Hindu Pantheon, 194. See in the Raghuvansa, ii, 60. No sooner has king Dilípa offered himself to die for the sacred cow of his Brahminical preceptor, than "a shower of flowers" falls upon him.

P. 277, l. 17.—*stands the Apsara in heaven.*] The birth of the Apsarasas is thus related in the Ramayana.

> Then from the agitated deep upsprung
> The legion of Apsarasas, so named
> That to the watery element they owed
> Their being. Myriads were they born, and all
> In vesture heavenly clad, and heavenly gems;
> Yet more divine their native semblance, rich
> With all the gifts of grace and youth and beauty,

A train innumerous followed, yet thus fair
Nor god nor démon sought their widowed love;
Thus Rághava they still remain, their charms
The common treasure of the host of heaven.
WILSON's Translation, preface to the Drama of Vikrama and Urvasi, p. 13.

P. 278, l. 24. *Then at peace the tranquil city.*] The Calcutta edition has a better reading than that of Bopp. Instead of *Prasantè Pushkara* (Pushkara appeased), it is *Prasantè tu pure*, (the city being tranquil, the rejoicings having ceased). WILSON.

P. 278, l. 29. *Nala lived, as lives the sovereign—of the gods in Nandâna.*] Nandâna is the garden of Indra.

P. 278, l. 31. *Ruled his realm in Jambudwîpa.*] Sic in Puranis India nominatur. BOPP.

NOTES

TO

THE DEATH OF YAJNADATTA.

P. 279, l. 15. *So I the lovely Amra left.*] The Amra is the Mangifera Indica. This tree is not only valuable in the estimation of the Indians for the excellence of its fruits; the belief that the burning juice of its flowers is used to steep the darts of love, enhances their veneration for this beautiful tree. It is frequently mentioned in their poetry. M. Cuezy.

P. 279, l. 15.—*for the Palasa's barren bloom.*] The Palasa is the Butea Frondosa of Koenig. Its flowers, of great beauty, are papilionaceous; and its fruit, entirely without use in domestic economy, compared particularly with the Amra, may well be called barren. M. Cuezy. See Sir W. Jones's Essay on the Botany of India; and the Asiatic Researches, vol. iii.

P. 280, l. 3. —*hath fallen upon my fated head.*] "Yes, iniquity once committed, fails, not of producing fruit to him who wrought it; if not in his own person, yet in his son's: or if not in his son's, yet in his grandson's." Menu, iv. 173.

P. 280, l. 10. —*where haunt the spirits of the dead!*] The south, the realm of Yama, the judge of the dead.

P. 280, l. 11. —*on high the welcome clouds appeared.*] The beauty of nature after the rainy season has refreshed the earth, is a favourite topic in Indian poetry. The Cloud Messenger, so gracefully translated by Mr. Wilson, is full of allusions to the grateful progress of the cloud, welcomed as it passes along by the joy of animate and inanimate beings. See 61—70, 131—142. Compare, in the Hindu Drama, the Toy Cart, act v.

P. 281, l. 6. *As though a pupil's hand accursed.*] The offences of a pupil against a tutor, almost the holiest relation of life, are described in the Laws of Menu, ii. 191 to 218, 242, 8. "By censuring his preceptor, though justly, he will be born an ass; by falsely defaming him, a dog; by using his goods without leave, a small worm; by envying his merit, a larger insect or reptile." As the Roman law did not contemplate the possibility of parricide, that of Menu has no provision against the crime in the text.

P. 281, l. 10. —*to the five elements returned.*] A common Indian phrase for death. The æther is the fifth element.

P. 281, l. 19.—*Kshatriya.*] The second, or warrior-caste. The kings in India were usually of this caste.

P. 282, l. 1.—*Raghu.*] One of the famous ancestors of Dasaratha. The poem of the Raghu Vansa has recently appeared, edited by M. Stenzler.

P. 282, l. 7. *My sire, a Brahmin hermit he—my mother was of Sudra race.*] This seems inconsistent with Menu: "A Brahmin, if he take a Sudra to his bed as his first wife, sinks to the regions of torment; if he begets a child by her, he loses even his priestly rank." iii. 17; also 18, 19.

P. 284, l. 9. *The miserable father now.*] See in Menu, the penalties and expiations for killing a Brahmin undesignedly, xi, 74,

82; compare 90. "An assaulter of a Brahmin with intent to kill, shall remain in hell a hundred years; for actually striking him with like intent, a thousand; as many small pellets of dust as the blood of a Brahmin collects on the ground, for so many thousand years must the shedder of that blood be tormented in hell." xi. 207, 8.

P. 285, l. 15.—*I've reached the wished for realms of joy.*] Among the acts which lead to eternal bliss are these: "Studying and comprehending the Veda—showing reverence to a natural or spiritual father." MENU, xii. 83.

NOTES

TO

THE BRAHMIN'S LAMENT.

P. 288, l. 21. —*a heaven-winning race, may make.*] Literally: Whom Brahma has placed with me in trust for a future husband, and through whose offspring I may obtain with my progenitors the regions secured by ablutions made by a daughter's sons. WILSON.

P. 288, l. 31. A line is omitted here, which seems to want a parallel to make up the sloka. Bopp has omitted it in his translation.

P. 289, l. 31. —*Sudras like.*] The lowest caste who are not privileged, and indeed have no disposition in the native barrenness of their minds to study the sacred Vedas.

P. 290, l. 2. *As the storks the rice of offering.*] We follow Bopp in refining these birds from birds of coarser prey.

THE DESCENT OF THE GANGES.

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THE descent of the Ganges is the sequel of another fiction, still more monstrous, but perhaps one of the most singular of the cosmogonical notions of the Indians. Sagara, the king of Ayodhya (Oude), was without offspring—in almost all eastern countries the most grievous calamity incident to man, more especially to those of noble or royal race. By the most surpassing penances he obtains an oracle from the wise Brighu, predicting that one of his wives will bring forth a single son, the other *sixty thousand!* Accordingly the fair Cesina gives birth to Asamanja; his other wife to a gourd, which, like the egg of Leda, is instinct with life. From the seeds of this gourd, preserved with great care, and fed with ghee, come forth in due time the sixty thousand boys. The son of Cesina was a youth of the most malicious and cruel disposition; his pastime was to throw little infants into the river, and solace himself with their cries. He is sent into exile by his just and humane father, where he has a son, Ansuman, as gentle and popular as Asamanja was malignant and odious. King Sagara prepares to offer the Aswameda, the famous sacrifice of the horse. The holy and untouched steed is led forth, as in the "Curse of Kehama," among the admiring multitude, by the youthful Ansuman, when on a sudden a monstrous serpent arises from the earth, and drags it into the abyss. Sagara, in wrath, commands his sixty thousand sons to undertake the recovery of the steed from the malignant demon who has thus interrupted the sacrifice. Having searched long in vain, they begin to dig into the bowels of the earth, until,—

'Cloven with shovel and with hoe, pierced by axes and by spades,
Shrieked the earth in frantic woe; rose from out the yawning chades

Yells of anguish, hideous roars from the expiring brood of hell—
Serpents, giants, and Asoors, in the deep abyss that dwell.
Sixty thousand leagues in length, all unweary, full of wrath, [path.'
Through the centre, in their strength, clove they down their hellward

The gods, expecting the whole frame of the world, thus undermined, to perish in total ruin, assemble around Brahma to implore his interposition. He informs them that Vishnu, in the form of Kapila, has been the robber of the horse, and that, in due time, the god will avenge himself. From Patala, the hell of Indian mythology, the Sagaridæ recommence their impious and destructive work.

'And downward dug they many a rood, and downward till they saw aghast, [vast.
Where the earth-bearing elephant stood, ev'n like a mountain tall and
'Tis he whose head aloft sustains the broad earth's forest-clothed round,
With all its vast and spreading plains, and many a stately city crown'd.
If underneath the o'erbearing load bows down his weary head, 'tis then
The mighty earthquakes are abroad, and shaking down the abodes of men. [blest
Around earth's pillar moved they slowly, and thus in humble accents
Him the lofty and the holy, that bears the region of the East.
And southward dug they many a rood, until before their shuddering sight [height.
The next earth-bearing elephant stood, huge Mahapadmas' mountain
Upon his head earth's southern bound, all full of wonder, saw they rest.
Slow and awe-struck paced they round, and him, earth's southern pillar, blest.
Westward then their work they urge, king Sagara's six myriad race,
Unto the vast earth's western verge, and there in his appointed place
The next earth-bearing elephant stood, huge Saumanasa's mountain crest; addrest,
Around they paced in humble mood, and in like courteous phrase
And still their weary toil endure, and onward dig until they see
Last earth-bearing Himapandure, glorying in his majesty.'

At length they reach the place where Vishnu appears in the form of Kapila, with the horse feeding near him; a flame issues forth from the indignant deity, and the six myriad sons of Sagara become a heap of ashes.

The adventure devolves on the youthful Ansuman, who achieves it with perfect success; Vishnu permits him to lead away the steed, but the ashes of his brethren cannot be purified by earthly water; the goddess Ganga must first be brought to earth, and, having undergone lustration from that holy flood, the race of Sagara are to ascend to heaven. Yet a long period elapses; and it is not till the reign of the virtuous Bhagiratha, that Brahma is moved by his surpassing penance to grant the descent of Ganga from heaven. King Bhagiratha had taken his stand on the top of Gokarna, the sacred peak of the Himavan, (the Himalaya,) and here

'Stands with arms outstretch'd on high, amid five blazing fires, the one
Towards each quarter of the sky, the fifth the full meridian sun.
Mid fiercest frosts on snow he slept, the dry and withered leaves his food,
Mid rains his roofless vigil kept, the soul and sense alike subdued.'

His prayers are irresistible; but Brahma forewarns him, that the unbroken descent of Ganga from heaven would be so overpowering, that the earth would be unable to sustain it, and Siva must be propitiated, in order that he may receive on his head the precipitous cataract. Under this wild and unwieldy allegory appears to lurk an obscure allusion to the course of the Ganges among the summits, and under the forests of the Himalaya, which are the locks of Siva.

'High on the top of Himavān the mighty Mashawara stood;
And "Descend," he gave the word to the heaven-meandering water—
Full of wrath, the mandate heard Himavān's majestic daughter.
To a giant's stature soaring and intolerable speed,
From heaven's height down rush'd she, pouring upon Siva's sacred head,
Him the goddess thought in scorn with her resistless might to sweep
By her fierce waves overborne, down to hell's remotest deep.'

Siva, in his turn enraged, resists her fury.

'Down on Sankara's holy head, down the holy fell, and there
Amid the entangling meshes spread, of his loose and flowing hair,
Vast and boundless as the woods upon the Himalaya's brow,
Nor ever may the struggling floods rush headlong to the earth below.
Opening, egress was not there, amid those winding, long meanders.
Within that labyrinthine hair, for many an age, the goddess wanders.'

The king again has recourse to his penances, Siva is propitiated, and the stream by seven * channels finds its way to the plains of India. The spirit and the luxuriance of the description which follows, of the king leading the way, and the obedient waters rolling after his car, appear to me of a high order of poetry.

'Up the raja at the sign upon his glittering chariot leaps,
Instant Ganga the divine follows his majestic steps.
From the high heaven burst she forth first on Siva's lofty crown,
Headlong then and prone to earth thundering rushed the cataract down,
Swarms of bright-hued fish came dashing; turtles, dolphins in their mirth,
Fallen or falling, glancing, flashing, to the many-gleaming earth.
And all the host of heaven came down, spirits and genii, in amaze,
And each forsook his heavenly throne, upon that glorious scene to gaze.
On cars, like high tower'd cities, seen, with elephants and coursers, rode,
Or on soft swinging palanquin, lay wondering each observant god.
As met in bright divan each god, and flash'd their jewell'd vestures' rays,
The coruscating æther glow'd, as with a hundred suns ablaze.

* Schlegel supposes the three western streams to be the Indus, which appears under its real name the Sind, the Iaxartes, and the Oxus; are not the Sareswatie, or perhaps the Sutlej, under the name of Sita, and the Jumna meant? Of the eastern branches, it is not difficult to fix the Burhampooter. Schlegel suggests the Irawaddy, and the Blue River of China. Why not the Alacananda and the Gogra? The main stream bears the name of the Bhaghirat'ha, till it joins the Alacananda and takes the name of the Ganges.

And with the fish and dolphins gleaming, and scaly crocodiles and snakes, [breaks:
Glanc'd the air, as when fast streaming the blue lightning shoots and
And in ten thousand sparkles bright went flashing up the cloudy spray,
The snowy flocking swans less white, within its glittering mists at play.
And headlong now poured down the flood, and now in silver circlets wound, [around,
Then lakelike spread all bright and broad, then gently, gently flowed
Then 'neath the cavern'd earth descending, then spouted up the boiling tide, [smooth subside.
Then stream with stream harmonious blending, swell bubbling up or
By that heaven-welling water's breast, the genii and the sages stood,
Its sanctifying dews they blest, and plung'd within the lustral flood.
Whoe'er beneath the curse of heaven from that immaculate world had fled,
To th' impure earth in exile driven, to that all-holy baptism sped;
And purified from every sin, to the bright spirit's bliss restor'd,
Th' ethereal sphere they entered in, and through th' empyreal mansions soar'd.
The world in solemn jubilee behold those heavenly waves draw near,
From sin and dark pollution free, bathed in the blameless waters clear.
Swift king Bhagiratha drave upon his lofty glittering car,
And swift with her obeisant wave bright Ganga followed him afar.'

THE DELUGE *.

AN ODE.

"For as the days of Noe were, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. For, as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be."

MATTHEW XXV. 37—39.

SPIRIT of man! if e'er thy faith essay
To shadow forth that final judgment day,
When the vast universal doom
Shall earth and heaven, and nature's self, entomb;
Spirit of man! when dread Annihilation,
Making created space its realm,
All things in second chaos shall o'erwhelm,
To wait the omnific word of new creation,
The awe, the majesty, the desolation;
Myriads of angels round his ire,
Whose presence is th' all-wasting fire,
The arch-angelic trumpet sternly blown,
All sepulchres at once upbreaking,
All climes, all nations, races, ages, waking;

* This poem has been written for some time, but is now first published.

All flesh before the sun-obscuring throne;
Vastness and multitude and boundless power,
Time's close, th' unfolding of Eternity,
A world's decay, birth of a world to be,
All crowded in that one mysterious hour,
The labouring faculties confound, oppress,
But most thine own too guilty consciousness;
Down, down thou plungest in appall'd despair,
Back to life's hurried scene, and earth's low-thoughted care.
As in the days of Noah, saith the Word,
Such is the coming of the avenging Lord.
Seek then, my soul, to contemplate
That prescient type of universal fate.
Awake, rise up, thy watch tower build sublime,
On Ararat, or star-touch'd Himalay!
The elder giant-peopled earth survey,
Spread at thy feet the world of that dread time,
When the huge nations of the Anakim
Of solid rock their cities built,
For centuries of life and guilt;
When other mountains rear'd their marble pride;
And perish'd rivers pour'd their floods
Beneath th' unhewn primeval woods:
Where now are arid sands, roll'd ocean's tide;
Where toss and chafe the deep and barren seas,
Ere many a wave-wash'd isle was rent,
And sever'd from the unbroken continent,
The green Earth smil'd, and shook her waving trees;

And, from the rising to the setting day,
Empires, whose names have perish'd, spread their sway:
Another world! another humankind!
In sin and pride the same, the fierce and godless mind.

Kings sate on thrones, and iron-armed legions
March'd to and fro to waste earth's fairest regions;
Strong Tyranny and cruel Might
Trampled on Innocence and bleeding Right;
Each heart secure fed on its blissful schemes;
In Riot's courts the voice of Luxury laugh'd,
And the new wine in purple flood was quaff'd;
And toiling Avarice dream'd his golden dreams;
Even as themselves the world immortal seems.
In crowded mart and busy street
The buyer and the seller meet,
And bridal feasts danced forth with timbrel sound;
And warriors fought for deathless name,
And Poets heap'd their everlasting fame
On kings, to be through Time's whole course renown'd.
But, all around where lay that wondrous Bark,
Sailless and oarless on the desart dry,
Danced mocking Scorn and loose Festivity;
While two by two clomb up the lofty Ark,
Prescient of fate, each beast that rang'd the world,
And each plum'd bird, its useless pinions furl'd,
And reptile tribes minute, and Man the last
Back on lost earth his looks of ominous sadness cast.

But on the first of those dread forty days,
When swam the heavens with thick and lurid haze;
And mutinous waters 'gan to roar,
Slow heaving up against the lessening shore,
And the moist winds their dripping plumes to shake;
When fiercely gush'd the torrent rain,
Cloud wildly roll'd o'er cloud amain;
And now the great deep's bursting fountains break,
Then earth began, but not mankind, to quake.
What was it to the lord of many realms,
That far away the Deluge overwhelms
The fisher's reed-built hut, the shepherd's shed?
The mighty Plunderer, wont to dwell
High in his eagle citadel,
Secure upon his spoils reposed his head.
O great Jehovah! in the jaws of doom
What thousands still disdain'd the suppliant prayer,
Still, still the evening's jocund feast prepare,
Still on to-morrow's gladsome sun presume.
On his high place the dauntless Pagan stood,
Led up his sacrifice of human blood;
Around the steaming altar proudly trod,
Look'd on the flood beneath, and bless'd his tutelar God.

But when more fast rocks, forests, disappear,
Still draw the sea and sky more near, more near.
Day after day a deeper gloom,
More fierce Heaven's cataracts pour, more hoarse
the billows boom;

When morn and noon were one long sunless night;
When they had welcom'd wasteful lightning,
Than that pale settled darkness less affrightening;
Everywhere flying, yet no place for flight:
Buyer and seller, in each other's sight,
Whelm'd with the vainly gotten gold;
Bridegroom and bride together roll'd,
And weltering in their first, last cold embrace;
From every quarter mountain billows rushing,
Towers, temples, even embattled cities crushing,
Death blackening in each desperate human face.
Aloft upon some high and dizzy crag,
Pale, haggard, shivering, scarce alive,
Of wasted towns one wretched fugitive,
Where scarce her fainting steps her burthen drag,
The cowering mother and her unweaned child,
Meets with the shaggy prowler of the wild;
Tiger and man in strange society,
Yet both half dead with awe, stand tame and shuddering by.

Hark! howling cries from mountain palace towers!
Wailings and shrieks from Luxury's air-hung bowers!
Launch the strong barges, hew the limbs
Of every clinging wretch that grasps, and swims
Cumbering with desperate strength the galley's side.
Most wretched, who in horrid strife
Prolong the unutterable pangs of life,

Dash'd to and fro 'mid furious whirlpools ride,
Or, famine-struck, pine o'er the barren tide!
Alas! the limbs nurs'd up in silken bravery,
Fann'd, feasted, pamper'd, by obsequious slavery;
The delicate, the beauteous, and the soft,
Kings' paramours and ivory-bosom'd daughters,
Making their bride-beds in the howling waters;
Or spared by cruel mercy, plunging oft
Deep, deep, 'mid stunning din, and choking weight;
Again uplifted, naked, wan as ghosts.
Alas the strong! whose valour awed whole hosts,
Rais'd and hurl'd down the gulf insatiate,
Light as heaven's blasts whirl autumn's withered leaves;
All, all, the inexorable gulf receives;
Armies like sea-weed strew'd th' unglutted surge,
Whole populous cities sink, and continents submerge.

Oh earth! earth! earth! where all thy multitudes,
The teeming herds, the swarming forest broods?
The birds the shoreless waves o'erfly,
Fold their dank weary wings, and plunge and die.
Thy human tribes, countless as ocean's sands,
One to the branch of mountain pine-tree clinging,
Th' o'erweighing brine from his loose tresses wringing,
Or grasping his wreck'd boat with failing hands.
Alas! alas! the voices of all lands,

The melodies, the music quench'd and drown'd
In the hoarse ocean's all-pervading sound.
And now no longer the disdainful flood
'Gainst man's exterminated labour rages;
With nature's self intestine war she wages:
The seated mountain, with its weight of wood
Upheaving, hurls upon the groaning plain;
Rifts solid rocks, the marble ridge
Once wont the spacious continent to bridge,
With horrible disruption rends amain:
On highest crags, as though in scorn, are cast
Her weeds and shells in loose confusion vast:
Things huge and ponderous float—till now the Deep,
Like a gorged monster, spreads in wide and waveless sleep.

O God Omnipotent! thy world is this,
Thy breathing world of beauty, wealth, and bliss;
That made the morning stars rejoice,
And wondering seraphs lift the exultant voice?
Oh verdant groves, by crystal fountains clear!
Oh vales, whose ever-blooming flowers
No moisture knew but dews and gentlest showers;
Oh mountains, where at eve were wont t' appear
Plumed angels resting on their bright career!
Oh earth, by God himself approv'd!
Oh earth, by every spirit of heaven belov'd!

Father Almighty! if thou spar'dst not them—
If vain all frantic cries of late repenting,
Wild wordless prayers in drowning agonies venting,
Vain the forced adoration of lost men,
Lost generations swept at once away,
Fierce self-reproach, and impotent remorse:
Nor Justice stay'd the inexorable course;
For rose-cheek'd youth, or childhood's blameless play,
For soft benign affections lingering still
To leaven the dark mass of human ill;
Maternal love, friendship, and brotherhood,
All undistinguish'd sunk in the remorseless flood.

Thou spar'dst not; and shall we have nought to plead,
Blind as of old, against the day of dread?
Still, still the measured years unfold,
Th' exhausted ages o'er the earth are roll'd.
Hark! voices from the perish'd and the past,
From that old ruin'd world, "Repent! Repent!"
Oh Earth! shall not thy soften'd face present
A fairer, holier aspect than the last?
Shall all thy heaven-sent gifts have run to waste?
Hath Goodness walk'd the world in vain,
With Peace, Joy, Wisdom in his train;
And Charity, before whose awful face
Brute Violence, and Fraud, and Ignorance rude,
May shrink to some lone untrod solitude,
And War lay down his desolating mace;

Majestic Order and all-reverenced Law
Rule o'er the nations; social Harmony
Gather mankind in one calm family:
Wisdom, consorting with religious Awe,
Guage earth, bridge ocean, soar the star-paved skies,
Yet veil before God's throne her meek and reverent eyes?
Shalt thou not find, God's, Love's eternal Son,
Thy kingdom here of truth, of peace, of love, begun?

STANZAS

ON AN INCIDENT OBSERVED DURING THE FUNERAL OF THE DAUGHTER OF SIR WALTER SCOTT, THE WIFE OF MY FRIEND MR. LOCKHART.

" Over that solemn pageant mute and dark,
  Where in the grave we laid to rest
  Heaven's latest, not least welcome guest,
What didst thou on the wing, thou jocund lark!
  Hovering in unrebuked glee,
And carolling above that mournful company?

" O thou light-loving and melodious bird!
    At every sad and solemn fall
    Of mine own voice, each interval
In the soul-elevating prayer, I heard
    Thy quivering descant full and clear—
Discord not inharmonious to the ear!

" We laid her there, the Minstrel's darling child.
    Seem'd it then meet that, borne away
    From the close city's dubious day,

Her dirge should be thy native woodnote wild;
Nursed upon nature's lap, her sleep
Should be where birds may sing, and dewy flowerets
weep?

"Ascendedst thou, air-wandering messenger!
Above us slowly lingering yet,
To bear our deep, our mute regret;
To waft upon thy faithful wing to her
The husband's fondest, last farewell—
Love's final parting pang, the unspoke, the unspeak-
able?

"Or didst thou rather chide with thy blithe voice
Our selfish grief, that would delay
Her passage to a brighter day;
Bidding us mourn no longer, but rejoice
That it hath heavenward flown, like thee,
That spirit from this cold world of sin and sorrow
free?

"I watched thee, lessening, lessening to the sight,
Still faint and fainter winnowing
The sunshine with thy dwindling wing;
A speck, a movement in the ruffled light;
Till thou wert melted in the sky,
An undistinguish'd part of the bright infinity.

" Meet emblem of that lightsome spirit thou!
That still, wherever it might come,
Shed sunshine o'er that happy home.
Her task of kindliness and gladness now
Absolved, with the element above
Hath mingled, and become pure light, pure joy, pure love."

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